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## Events, Opportunities

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HEADLINE	08/23 Demand spurs natural gas prices to spike
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/endless-demand-spurs-u-s-natural-gas-prices-to-shale-era-highs-11661245053?mod=hp_lead_pos1">https://www.wsj.com/articles/endless-demand-spurs-u-s-natural-gas-prices-to-shale-era-highs-11661245053?mod=hp_lead_pos1</a>
GIST	The 14-year highs reached this week by U.S. natural-gas futures show the unceasing demand for U.S. shale gas across the Atlantic—and likely point to higher prices ahead.

The latest price spike came in response to [Russia's plans](#) to shut down one of Europe's main fuel arteries for a few days at the end of the month. The shutdown announced Friday is either the [latest episode of unplanned maintenance](#) along the vital Nord Stream gas pipeline or an act of economic warfare on Russia's part in retaliation for [Western Europe's support for Ukraine](#).

Surging prices in Europe, weather that remains hotter than normal in much of the country and the heart of hurricane season, when storms can knock out production platforms in the Gulf of Mexico, threaten to send prices higher, analysts and traders say.

"Virtually all of our fundamental and technical indicators continue to flash green lights toward higher price levels," trading firm Ritterbusch & Associates told clients on Monday, predicting that near-term prices could climb to as high as \$11.90.

On Monday, U.S. futures for delivery in November, December and January each topped \$10 per million British thermal units. Prices haven't been that high since 2008, which was back before [the shale-drilling boom](#) flooded the domestic market with cheap gas and the U.S. flipped from importing the power-plant fuel to becoming [the world's leading exporter](#).

Front-month futures aren't far behind winter prices. Gas for September delivery hit above \$10 early Tuesday, up more than 20% this month and more than twice the price a year ago.

Normally this time of year, prices ease into the mild weather of autumn, encouraging producers and traders to store gas in underground caverns until winter, when demand and prices are usually at their highest.

This year, though, brisk exports, the electricity demand associated with some of the [hottest and driest weather](#) on record and [sluggish production growth](#) have kept U.S. natural-gas supplies from swelling into heating season.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration last week reported an unseasonably meager injection into storage facilities that enlarged to 12.7% the deficit to typical inventory levels for this time of year.

"We are beginning to see a lag in storage builds that could lead to a precarious situation during the draw season in the event of a harsher-than-expected winter," said Neal Dingmann, an energy equities analyst at Truist Securities. "There is potential for a winter U.S. superspike."

Monthly domestic production reached its highest level since the pandemic in May, though remained short of the output record set in December 2019, EIA data show. Analysts say output has decreased lately.

Domestic demand is rising, though. [Coal prices](#) that have risen more sharply than those for gas and scarce supplies have limited power producers' options for generating electricity, which has been in high demand [to run air conditioners](#) this summer. Government energy forecasters expect average daily U.S. gas consumption this year to be 3% higher. They expect year-over-year production gains at roughly the same rate.

Meanwhile, exports are set to rise this fall when one of the country's biggest liquefied-natural-gas, or LNG, terminals resumes operations. Freeport LNG's facility on a Texas barrier island has been shut down [since a fire in early June](#), reducing U.S. export capacity by about one-sixth, or about 2 billion cubic feet a day.

That is roughly enough gas to power 50,000 homes for a year and became available to domestic buyers this summer, helping to keep prices down at home. Freeport said earlier this month that it expects to resume exports in October.

HEADLINE	08/23 Momentum tilts against Russia
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/after-six-months-of-war-in-ukraine-momentum-tilts-against-russia-11661247003?cx_testId=3&amp;cx_testVariant=cx_2&amp;cx_artPos=0&amp;mod=WTRN#cxrecs_s">https://www.wsj.com/articles/after-six-months-of-war-in-ukraine-momentum-tilts-against-russia-11661247003?cx_testId=3&amp;cx_testVariant=cx_2&amp;cx_artPos=0&amp;mod=WTRN#cxrecs_s</a>
GIST	<p>Six months after Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, signs are accumulating that the balance on the military and economic battlefields is slowly tilting the way of Kyiv and its Western backers.</p> <p>In the biggest war between European countries since World War II, the death and destruction have no end in sight. Ukraine is still struggling against Russia's advantage in raw firepower, but the country's defenders are increasingly <a href="#">hitting Russian logistics and bases</a>, including in Crimea, as they receive more Western weapons.</p> <p>A drone strike on <a href="#">the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet</a> in Crimea on Saturday was one of many recent signs that Russia's rear areas are increasingly vulnerable to Ukrainian attack.</p> <p>Political and popular backing for Ukraine in the U.S. and most of Europe remains robust, despite fears that a drawn-out war and <a href="#">rising energy and food prices</a> could undermine Western unity.</p> <p>The U.S., in particular, is sending Ukraine steadily growing quantities of advanced weapons such as the <a href="#">High Mobility Artillery Rocket System</a>, or Himars, as well as crucial financial support. The U.S. announced another nearly \$800 million in military assistance for Ukraine on Friday, including drones, artillery and ammunition. For the first time, the package includes mine-clearing equipment and tactical vehicles that suggest the U.S. is arming Ukraine in new ways to retake lost territory.</p> <p>"The Russian military has lost much of what momentum it had and has redeployed a lot of its forces in anticipation of a Ukrainian offensive in the southern part of the country," said Michael Kofman, director of Russia studies program at CNA, a defense research organization in Arlington, Va.</p> <p>"I don't think there is a natural stalemate on the ground," he said. "I think there is at least another chapter to play out before winter."</p> <p>The outcome of that effort is far from clear, but the fate of the conflict now lies with what the Ukrainians are able to achieve.</p> <p>Both sides are believed to have lost tens of thousands of soldiers killed or wounded since Moscow's full-scale attack began on Feb. 24. Russia is struggling even more than Ukraine to replace losses of troops and materiel, <a href="#">relying on mercenaries</a>, proxy militias and old tanks to fill the gaps. <a href="#">Russia's economy</a> is facing a far deeper recession than Western nations.</p> <p>Some results of the war already seem settled. Russian President <a href="#">Vladimir Putin's attempt to rewrite the ending</a> of the Cold War by restoring Moscow's historic sphere of influence in Eastern Europe has failed. His war on Ukraine has instead united almost all of Europe against him, revivifying the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which is poised <a href="#">to add Sweden and Finland</a> as new members.</p> <p>Widespread evidence of alleged Russian atrocities against Ukrainians and Mr. Putin's weaponization of energy, food and <a href="#">even nuclear safety</a> have made his regime a pariah throughout the developed world—although not in the Global South, where skepticism toward the West runs deep.</p> <p>And Ukraine has already achieved a political win by surviving as an independent country, against expectations in Moscow as well as many Western capitals that Kyiv would collapse under Russia's onslaught. The war has reinforced Ukraine's distinct national identity and its determination to reorient its economy, politics and security arrangements toward the West.</p> <p>But the final outcome of the war remains as uncertain as its duration. Russia still has far more artillery and shells. The difficulty of advancing over open ground makes it hard for Ukraine to retake occupied land. Western military aid, especially from Europe, remains slow and stuttering from Kyiv's perspective. Many</p>

Western policy makers continue to doubt that Ukraine can achieve military victory short of a level of Western support that might risk escalation into a direct war with Russia.

The Biden administration has been circumspect from the start, sending weapons in fits and starts and only providing more advanced capabilities such as HIMARS after weeks or months of careful consideration, fearing escalation or that equipment could fall into the wrong hands. The contemplative approach has opened the U.S. up to criticism that it didn't move fast enough initially, even as U.S. officials contend they are [getting materiel into Ukraine](#) as fast as possible.

Ukraine's badly damaged economy has begun to stabilize, but its government [is acutely short of money](#), partly because the European Union hasn't delivered on its promises of financial aid. Money-printing to pay for the war risks undermining Ukraine's currency.

And the harshest economic fallout won't hit Europe until early 2023, when winter will test the EU's frantic preparations for [living without Russian gas](#).

It is normal for all sides to feel pain in a war of attrition, however. The question is which side can outlast the other and impose its will.

As summer ends, Ukraine's defenders are showing a newfound ability to strike deep behind Russian lines, including in the Crimea and Kherson regions of Ukraine's Russian-occupied south.

Russia's offensive in the eastern Donbas area [is losing steam](#). Moscow has been forced to redeploy its troops to shore up [vulnerable positions in the south](#). Retaking large territories from Russian occupiers remains a formidable challenge for Ukraine's soldiers, however.

"Ukraine has gained the strategic initiative. But we don't know what they can do with it yet," said François Heisbourg, a former French official and special adviser at the Paris-based Foundation for Strategic Research.

Ukraine's southern counteroffensive won't be a mass frontal assault on Russian lines, Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, said in an interview. Rather, he said, Ukraine will try to replicate the strategy it used to defend Kyiv: attacking Russian logistics behind the front line, including with guerrilla tactics, to degrade Russia's ability to wage war and force a withdrawal.

"The Russians need ammunition, fuel and field headquarters that are close to the front. We destroy the fuel and ammunition, then there is confusion because there is no headquarters, so it is already a demoralized army. Then you start to strike and slice it up," Mr. Podolyak said. "It worked in the defense of Kyiv, and it will work the same way in the counteroffensive."

Mr. Podolyak said Ukraine needs more HIMARS and attack drones that can pierce Russian electronic-warfare defenses.

U.S. defense officials believe that while neither side is gaining significant ground against the other in the current phase of fighting, Ukrainian attacks on Russian infrastructure deep behind the front line show how the initiative has shifted.

The war is entering a different phase compared with two months ago, when Russian forces had more momentum in the battle for Donbas, a senior Pentagon official said on Friday. "I would say that you are seeing a complete and total lack of progress by the Russians on the battlefield," the official said.

Meanwhile, the EU remains on high alert about [running out of energy this winter](#), though some say the risk of an outright natural-gas shortage is subsiding as countries buy up non-Russian gas and EU efforts to save energy and share supplies take effect.

Energy analysts say Europe's outlook is less dire than it looked earlier this summer. Russia's dramatic cut to gas deliveries to Germany via the Nord Stream pipeline, now operating at only 20% of its capacity, has forced the EU into action to buy enough liquefied natural gas and ensure it can reach all parts of the bloc. The EU is now racing against time to build LNG terminals in time for next spring, when the region's gas reservoirs, which are now filling up, will be depleted again.

"We're not forecasting gas shortages or electrical blackouts," said James Huckstepp, European gas analyst at S&P Global Commodity Insights. But he said risks remain, including failure to complete new infrastructure in time, and the weather.

"Even if Putin cuts the much-reduced gas deliveries via Nord Stream to zero, we think Europe can get through winter, provided temperatures are normal," said Mr. Huckstepp. But a combination of a total Russian cutoff and a particularly cold winter could force rationing for factories and households.

Even without rationing, economists expect the combination of high energy and food prices, rising interest rates and a global slowdown to push much of Europe into at least a shallow recession this winter. A sharper energy crunch would almost certainly spell a deep recession.

Russia's economic outlook is much worse than the West's—although possibly less bad than predicted early this year, after Moscow stabilized the ruble and restored its oil exports. The International Monetary Fund now forecasts that Russian gross domestic product will contract 6% this year and shrink further for years to come.

A detailed Yale University study published in July looked at the state of Russia's trade, industries and finances and concluded the country's situation is more dramatic than the IMF forecast or Russian official data suggest, with the authors writing, "Business retreats and sanctions are catastrophically crippling the Russian economy."

So far, Russia's dwindling economic prospects haven't moved Mr. Putin to end the war. Western officials say the goal of sanctions is to weaken his industrial and military capabilities, rather than to change his mind.

But Russia's strategy of using economic pressure to undermine Western political support for Ukraine isn't working either, so far.

Mr. Putin's determination to continue the war and evidence of widespread alleged Russian atrocities against Ukrainians have left the EU with little choice but to continue to support Kyiv and sanction Moscow.

Public support for Ukraine remains high around Europe and North America. Despite anger over inflation and high energy bills, opinion polls show most Europeans aren't blaming the problem on support for Ukraine. Calls to lift sanctions on Moscow remain largely limited to far-left and far-right politicians or figures with a history of pro-Russia sympathies.

Political divisions within the West have diminished since this spring, when leaders from France, Germany and Italy called for an early cease-fire in Ukraine. That infuriated countries in Northern and Eastern Europe that feel more exposed to Russian expansionism: Poland, the Baltic countries and others argued that a cease-fire that left Moscow occupying 20% of Ukraine would reward its aggression.

French President Emmanuel Macron faced particularly sharp criticism around Europe for his conciliatory rhetoric toward Mr. Putin, repeatedly saying Russia shouldn't be humiliated.

"The speed at which we were losing all credibility in the eastern half of Europe convinced Macron that it is not possible to play both sides," said Mr. Heisbourg. Since a high-profile trip to Kyiv in June, Mr. Macron has swung more strongly behind the common NATO position of support for Ukraine.

	<p>The U.S. has pumped about \$10.6 billion of military aid into Ukraine since the Biden administration entered office, with more assistance expected in the coming weeks. There is little sign that support for Ukraine is flagging in the U.S.</p> <p>“Most Americans are sympathetic to Ukraine and Zelensky has become a folk hero in a sense with a very large percentage of the population,” said Larry Sabato, a political analyst at the University of Virginia. Sustaining large amounts of assistance might become harder if the war goes on for many years, he said.</p> <p>Some analysts say there could be more opposition to support for Ukraine in Congress if Republicans gain control of one or both houses after the November midterm elections.</p> <p>But a congressional staffer believes the Republicans won’t relent in their support.</p> <p>“The votes will be there for Ukraine,” the staffer said in a text. “It’ll be a lot like the NATO accession vote for Finland and Sweden in the Senate, a lot of churn, but intellectually honest Republicans know what’s at stake in Ukraine.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Office glut began decades before pandemic</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/americas-office-glut-started-decades-before-pandemic-11661210031?mod=hp_lead_pos12">https://www.wsj.com/articles/americas-office-glut-started-decades-before-pandemic-11661210031?mod=hp_lead_pos12</a>
GIST	<p>A surplus of empty office space threatens to hollow out U.S. business districts. Don’t blame the pandemic.</p> <p>America’s office glut has been decades in the making, real-estate investors, brokers and analysts say. U.S. developers built too many office towers, lured by federal tax breaks, low interest rates and inflated demand from unprofitable startups. At the same time, landlords largely failed to tear down or convert old, mostly vacant buildings to other uses.</p> <p>As a result, the country has too many offices and too few companies willing to pay for space in them. The rise of remote work during the pandemic aggravated a problem that was already emerging, analysts say.</p> <p>The office surplus is primarily an American issue. About 19% of U.S. office space was vacant in the second quarter, compared with 14% in the Asia-Pacific region and 7% in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, according to brokerage JLL. Analysts expect that share to grow as more leases expire and more companies cut down on their real estate.</p> <p>High office vacancies threaten the finances of building owners and their lenders. They also harm the economies of cities such as New York and San Francisco, which rely on cubicle farms to pay taxes and sustain nearby shops and restaurants.</p> <p>The U.S. office glut traces its roots to a 1981 change in the tax code, brokers and analysts say. In a bid to boost the economy, the Reagan administration allowed investors to depreciate commercial real estate much more quickly than before, among other changes, lowering their tax bills.</p> <p>Savings-and-loan associations showered developers with easy loans, brokers say. That helped ignite an office-development boom in the 1980s that drove up vacancies to record levels and contributed to the savings-and-loan crisis, when many such institutions failed. Vacancy rates slowly fell in the 1990s, but surged again after the bursting of the dot-com bubble and the subprime mortgage crisis.</p> <p>In the decade after the 2008 subprime meltdown, office demand started to wane. More companies reduced their office space to cut costs. Firms realized they could save money by ditching private offices and cramming more employees into open floors. Some started allowing remote work.</p>



And yet the supply of office space kept growing. Substantial tax breaks and other subsidies over the past two decades went into projects such as New York's Hudson Yards and the World Trade Center. Conversions of old, empty office buildings into warehouses or apartments remained rare.

Landlords became more adept at inflating rents in return for giving tenants cash gifts and other incentives, creating a mirage of a strong market. Low interest rates and a flood of global capital into the U.S. real-estate market propped up the values of buildings even as demand for offices fell, giving their owners a false sense of security. These factors masked chronically high vacancies and prevented landlords from pursuing more conversions, said David Lipson, president of real-estate brokerage Savills North America.

Sam Zell, chairman of Equity Group Investments, said co-working companies such as WeWork Inc. also contributed to an oversupply of office space. Looking to grow quickly, such companies leased far more space than they could fill with customers in the years before the pandemic, covering their losses with billions of dollars from venture investors.

"By obfuscating those numbers we encouraged developers to come in and add office space in markets where there was no demand," Mr. Zell said during New York University's annual REIT Symposium earlier this year. Chicago's LaSalle Street, crowded with office towers, is now "a nowhere land with a whole bunch of obsolete buildings," he added.

Vacancy rates are highest in older buildings, which lack modern amenities and are less environmentally efficient. In Milwaukee, 100 East Wisconsin Avenue was the second-tallest building in the state when it opened in 1989. Two blocks from a freeway exit ramp and with a 750-car garage, the 35-story tower was perfect for office workers commuting from far-flung suburbs.

But in the years before the pandemic, developers built a number of glassy new office towers nearby that lured away 100 East Wisconsin's biggest tenants. Today more than half the building sits empty and the two biggest remaining leases are set to expire next year, according to data from CoStar Group and a person familiar with the matter. Unable to pay the mortgage, owner Hertz Investment Group handed over the property to a receiver in early 2021.

A number of investors have offered to buy 100 East Wisconsin to turn it into apartments, said Jared Friedman, senior managing director at the building's manager, Friedman Real Estate. The building has relatively small floors, making it a good candidate for a conversion, he said.

But many other aging office buildings lack such attributes, brokers say. High interest rates and rising construction costs also make conversions more difficult. "It's not going to be the savior of all that obsolete office space," said Julie Whelan, global head of occupier research at brokerage CBRE.

Instead, many old office buildings likely will end up under the wrecking ball. Brokers say the process will be slow because property owners often don't want to accept that their investment is lost. A drop in new office construction could help the market recover, but will also take years to have an impact.

In the meantime, vacancy rates are expected to keep rising. Some analysts estimate that remote work could reduce demand for office space as much as 20% for many years to come, although some brokerage firms project a smaller drop. More buildings will likely end up in foreclosure.

"Time solves all problems," said Mr. Zell. "The pain between here and there can be very significant."

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HEADLINE	08/23 Global economies flash slowdown warning
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/global-economies-flash-warning-of-sharp-slowdown-11661247579?mod=hp_lead_pos4">https://www.wsj.com/articles/global-economies-flash-warning-of-sharp-slowdown-11661247579?mod=hp_lead_pos4</a>

Business activity in Europe and Japan fell in August, according to new surveys, pointing to a sharp slowdown in global economic growth as higher prices weaken consumer demand and the [war in Ukraine](#) scrambles supply chains.

The second month of declining activity in Europe comes amid a [renewed rise in energy prices](#) over uncertainty about Russia's willingness to maintain its already reduced supply of natural gas ahead of the heating season.

Russian state gas supplier Gazprom Friday said it would [shut down the Nord Stream natural-gas pipeline](#) to Germany for three days of maintenance later in August. That sent gas prices on a fresh increase, spurred by worries over Europe's ability to amass sufficient fuel supplies before winter.

Data firm S&P Global said its composite Purchasing Managers Index for the eurozone—which measures activity in both the manufacturing and services sectors—fell to 49.2 in August from 49.9 in July, reaching an 18-month low. A reading below 50.0 indicates a decline in activity.

Manufacturing output fell for the third straight month, while the services sector narrowly avoided a contraction. Businesses in both sectors reported a decline in new orders, which points to weakness in the months to come, while factories reported a buildup in inventories as goods remained unsold.

“This [glut of inventories](#) suggests little prospect of an improvement in manufacturing production any time soon,” said Andrew Harker, an economist at S&P Global.

The [PMI](#) for Germany pointed to the sharpest decline in business activity since June 2020, while the measure for France pointed to the first decline in activity since the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the decline in Germany's manufacturing sector was shallower than in July.

The eurozone economy has been hit by the fallout from Russia's February invasion of Ukraine as higher energy and food prices have weakened household spending power and threatened business profit margins. The largest military conflict on the continent for almost eight decades—and one of the longest—has also hit household and business confidence.

For now, however, the jump in inflation has yet to derail the eurozone's recovery from the pandemic, which has been slower than in the U.S. partly because government restrictions were lifted later. The reopening of parts of the economy that had been fully or partly closed during much of 2021 led to an acceleration in economic growth during the three months through June, even as the U.S. economy contracted for the second straight quarter.

While a summer tourism season that is closer to the prepandemic norm could see the eurozone economy grow modestly in the three months through September, S&P's survey pointed to a decline in activity in the tourism and recreation industry during August.

That suggests the eurozone economy may already be in contraction, and economists doubt it will avoid that fate in the final months of the year as high energy prices take a bigger bite out of household budgets. The duration and severity of that contraction will depend on the scale of the hit to household spending, and whether energy rationing that would directly reduce factory output becomes necessary.

Economists at Barclays expect the eurozone economy to grow this quarter and then contract in the final three months of this year and the first quarter of 2023. But in a note to clients, they said their forecast of a mild recession “increasingly looks too optimistic” given uncertainties about the availability of natural gas.

S&P Global's surveys indicated that private sector activity in Japan and Australia also declined for the first time since a wave of new Covid-19 infections at the start of the year. Together with weakness in Europe, the surveys point to a weakening of growth in the global economy, although similar surveys to be released later Tuesday are expected to point to a steadying of the U.S. services sector after it contracted in July.



HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Philadelphia police face staffing crisis</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.foxnews.com/us/philadelphia-police-face-staffing-crisis-projected-get-worse">https://www.foxnews.com/us/philadelphia-police-face-staffing-crisis-projected-get-worse</a>
GIST	<p>The <a href="#">Philadelphia Police</a> Department is facing down a staffing crisis storm as hundreds of officers get ready to retire in the coming years amid the department already coping with a lean force.</p> <p>"We're definitely more concerned because within the next couple of years we have 800 officers signed up for the (DROP) program where they get up to four years to retire," Vice President of the Philadelphia FOP Lodge Roosevelt Poplar told WPVI. "Based on numbers we've seen it's going to be worse."</p> <p>The Philadelphia Police Department is currently operating at 20% below its targeted staffing level, according to the Philadelphia Inquirer. The figure comes after the city recorded 119 officers who left the force via retirement, termination, or resignation in 2020, which skyrocketed to 364 in 2021, according to WPVI.</p> <p>As of this year, 262 officers have left the force, putting the city on track to lose 500 officers by the end of this year, the local ABC outlet reported.</p> <p>"The city has to fill these positions. We need to be on a major recruiting mission," City Controller Rebecca Rhynhart said of the open positions. Recruiting levels have sat at about 100 officers so far this year, WPVI reported.</p> <p>The force is now bracing for a new wave of personnel exits. Just over 800 employees have enrolled in the city's Deferred Retirement Option Plan, a pension plan enhancement in which employees can enroll four years ahead of their official retirement date.</p> <p>Out of the more than 800 employees enrolled in the program, 40% are uniformed officers and civilian staff, according to the Philadelphia Inquirer. The number of officers who leave the force over the next four years is also likely to be higher, since not everyone in the department enrolls in DROP and the figure does not take into account the number of officers who will quit.</p> <p>"We're talking about at least 800 people over the next four years that have signed up for the DROP. These times are very scary. They're very challenging. We have to come up with a solution to make this more attractive. The service calls, you're not going to get a response time, to me, that's adequate enough to really help and support people," Poplar told WPVI while discussing his concerns for the public during the staffing issues.</p> <p>A spokesperson for the city told Fox News Digital on Monday that the police department is working to increase recruitment efforts "by utilizing increased funding to acquire technology that streamlines the hiring process, as well as developing and launching new marketing strategies." The city also allocated \$250,000 in its latest budget to increase recruitment efforts for city employees, including officers.</p> <p>"Mayor Kenney and the Administration recognize the incredible demands on police officers who are on the front lines and face adversity every day in service of protecting our residents. The past few years have presented major challenges with respect to recruitment of new police officers, which is an issue departments across the country are experiencing," the city spokesperson said.</p> <p>The staffing shortages in the City of Brotherly Love come as the city copes with a violent crime increase. Philadelphia recorded its bloodiest year on record in 2021, at 561 homicides. Shootings also increased last year by 4% compared to 2020 at 2,332 people shot.</p> <p>There have been 350 homicides so far this year, which marks a 3% increase over the same time period in 2021, according to the city controller's website.</p>

	<p>Philadelphia is far from alone in dealing with police staffing issues - cities across the country have reported more of the same.</p> <p>The Chicago Police Department reported the lowest number of employees in recent history at the end of March. The Seattle Police Department reached a 30-year staffing low this year. Washington, D.C., rolled out \$20,000 bonuses to new officers to boost staffing earlier this summer.</p> <p>"We see law enforcement officers leave our profession at a rate we've never seen before," National Fraternal Order of Police President Patrick Yoes said at the Faith &amp; Blue conference in Washington, D.C., earlier this month. "Our profession is dependent on the best and brightest stepping up and taking this job. And because of the actions, and because of the turmoil that has happened in the last two years, we have a crisis right now in manpower."</p> <p>Some analysts have attributed the staffing shortages to recent anti-police rhetoric and the defund the police movement that swept the nation in 2020 following the killing of George Floyd.</p> <p>"Unfortunately, we find ourselves in a very difficult time in American history in the last two years. America's law enforcement has been demonized by many. It has created a rift within this country and eroded the very trust of the institution and the profession of law enforcement," Yoes added during his remarks earlier this month. "And we're paying for it. We're paying for it in our communities with higher crime. And we're also paying for it in law enforcement officers."</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>08/22 Las Vegas police recruitment is down</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://knpr.org/knpr/2022-08/las-vegas-police-recruitment-numbers-are-down-heres-why-and-what-theyre-doing">https://knpr.org/knpr/2022-08/las-vegas-police-recruitment-numbers-are-down-heres-why-and-what-theyre-doing</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>Since their peak year of 2017, the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department's recruitment numbers have been decreasing, and it's not just due to expected retirements.</p> <p>Police have faced intense scrutiny amid the Black Lives Matter movement, following the killing of George Floyd in 2020.</p> <p>It's a worry for many, because police want to recruit people who are suited for the job.</p> <p>Richard Meyers, lieutenant over backgrounds, recruiting, and polygraph for the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, and Sgt. Vince Booker from the office of the chief at the North Las Vegas Police Department, spoke with State of Nevada host Joe Schoenmann about their departments' efforts.</p> <p>The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department has about 1.8 officers per 1,000 residents in Clark County, but the goal is 2.0 by August 2023.</p> <p>Meyers said while recruitments are down, it's not just a local problem, but a nationwide issue. Police agencies around the country are paying much more –Seattle offers \$20,000 more per year per officer, for example.</p> <p>"For us to be competitive with that," he said, "We're going to have to increase our pay."</p> <p>A new recruit at LVMPD starts at \$58,000, earning steady increases through field training, then again when they graduate to police officer. But he said they offer opportunities unlike other cities.</p> <p>"If they start to get stagnant in an area, the carrot that we can dangle is the opportunity to move and try something else in the organization," Meyers said. "So that they don't feel as though they're marking time and that they're getting, for lack of better terms, complacent in one position in the organization."</p> <p>The academy starting in September has 80 recruits, he said.</p>

Outside of Nevada, Las Vegas police recruited via a billboard campaign in five other major cities, but said social media is where they have the most success.

But since the killing of Floyd, police have faced tougher scrutiny and it's had an effect on how many people want to become police officers (though recruitment numbers have been declining since 2017). Meyers said it was a learning experience for police departments.

With that, he said they focus on local community engagement, or as they call it, "humanizing the badge."

Booker with the North Las Vegas Police Department said their goal is to grow with their city, which has had a population boom in recent years. He said the decline in recruitment is "natural attrition."

He echoed Meyers about promoting the full package of becoming an officer in North Las Vegas, but added that the department offered work from home opportunities.

"In the pandemic, we obviously had to look at different service models, and particularly with our investigators in the detective bureau," Booker said.

"We had the ability to allow our detectives to respond directly from home, to follow up on their investigations and to work their caseload. Obviously, our patrol officers, that model just doesn't necessarily fit with responding to crimes as they occur, and ensuring that we're responding in a timely manner. Some of our civilian personnel also had the ability to work from home. ... And it worked."

Along with expanding the department as a whole, Meyers said they're working to diversify the police force.

In 2021, LVMPD was 56% white, 20.6% Hispanic, 9.8% Black or African American, 6.3% Asian, 5.3% two or more races, 6% Indigenous and 1.5% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

About 33% of officers are female, compared to 14% in North Las Vegas.

"We have a recruiting subcommittee where we meet on, generally, a monthly basis with that subcommittee, and identify ways that we can recruit minorities into our community," he said.

He noted an event this past Saturday with Nevada Partners where 70 applicants showed up to Lake Mead Boulevard and J Street.

Booker said in North Las Vegas, they're focusing on community events: barbecues, Pride, Coffee With A Cop, Badges and Bows, as well as a recreational soccer league.

"We really look at really embedding our officers being a part of our community, humanizing the badge," he said.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Ukraine nuclear plant held hostage</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/23/world/europe/ukraine-zaporizhzhia-nuclear-power-plant.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/23/world/europe/ukraine-zaporizhzhia-nuclear-power-plant.html</a>
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine — In the winter darkness, tracer rounds from Russian armored vehicles streaked past nuclear reactors and high-tension electrical lines. A fire broke out. Shrapnel sprayed a reactor containment vessel.</p> <p>In the control room of Reactor No. 3, operators were horrified.</p> <p>"Stop firing at the nuclear facility," one begged over the station's loudspeakers. "You are endangering the safety of the entire world."</p>

The danger at the [Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant](#) — a sprawl of cooling towers, nuclear reactors, machine rooms and radioactive waste storage sites — was actually graver than even those who worked there knew at the time.

A large caliber bullet had pierced an outer wall of Reactor No. 4 but, most worrying and not disclosed at the time, an artillery shell had struck an electrical transformer at Reactor No. 6, which was filled with flammable cooling oil, plant employees subsequently learned and told The New York Times. Both reactors were active.

“By happy coincidence, it didn’t burn,” said an engineer, Oleksiy, who insisted that his last name not be publicly disclosed out of security concerns.

Five months later, with artillery fire once again striking the plant, the specter of a possible nuclear catastrophe has gripped the world’s attention. Urgent negotiations are taking place to try to arrange a [visit by experts from the International Atomic Energy Agency](#).

Officials from the United States, the European Union and the United Nations have called for [the creation of a demilitarized zone](#), as Ukraine and Russia [each accuse the other of preparing attacks](#) on the plant — leading many to [fear that Zaporizhzhia is in greater peril than ever](#).

Standing between the world and a nuclear calamity are the Ukrainian workers who know the plant intimately, having run it for years with the utmost precaution in a sleepy corner of southern Ukraine where the city and the plant had once lived in a steady and predictable symbiosis before the Russians arrived.

Today, under Russian occupation, the plant employees are both hostages and essential workers — Ukrainian engineers duty bound to prevent disaster while working under the watchful eye of Russian snipers.

The surrounding city where they live, Enerhodar, which translates as “the gift of energy,” is under siege. Some 100 plant workers have been detained by Russian forces, according to Ukrainian officials and residents. Ten of those are still missing.

It is up to a skeletal crew of stressed, tired and scared workers to prevent disaster.

“Imagine men and women coming to work and facing armed soldiers all around,” said Serhiy Shvets, a metalworker at the plant who was shot by Russian soldiers at his home in May. They had searched videos of people who protested in the first days of the war, and saw his face.

Mr. Shvets, 53, managed to get out of the city and to Ukrainian-controlled territory, where he spoke from his hospital bed. He fears for the plant, the city and the world with the Russian military now holed up in the nuclear station.

“They are like a monkey with a grenade, not really understanding the threat they are posing,” he said.

### **The Sleeping Giant**

Two months before the [Russian invasion](#), Enerhodar celebrated an annual holiday unique to a community living in the shadow of Europe’s largest nuclear power plant: “The Day of the Energy Engineer.”

There were dinners, music, dancing and a fireworks display. “It was enchanting and cool,” said Olha, an engineer who attended the celebrations and fled the city in May, but relayed communications from those inside.

Like other employees of the plant interviewed for this article, Olha would speak only on the condition of anonymity out of fear for her safety.

In a city of 55,000, some 11,000 people worked at the plant. The city's flag even features a blazing sun in tribute to the energy it provides.

Work on Zaporizhzhia began in 1984. When the sixth reactor came online in 1995, four years after the collapse of the Soviet Union and Ukraine's independence, Ukrainians celebrated Zaporizhzhia as an accomplishment.

It became both a source of pride and a symbol of Ukrainian perseverance in the impoverished, early post-Soviet years and the aftermath of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster, which occurred when a safety test simulating the effects of a power failure ended in what many considered to be the world's worst nuclear disaster.

After Chernobyl, and after Ukraine's independence, the authorities issued a brief moratorium on nuclear construction, but it was not long before the country forged ahead with its nuclear ambitions. Today, Ukraine is [second only to France](#) in relying on its reactor network to meet its electricity needs.

A unique achievement, the Zaporizhzhia site has unique vulnerabilities, as well.

The massive plant was conceived in the Soviet industrial design philosophy known as Gigantism, giving birth to a panorama of industrial prowess, where much of what would seem to be the plant's inner workings are exposed, rendering it especially vulnerable to the conflict now raging around it.

From the opposite shore of the Kakhovka reservoir, the cooling towers, smokestacks and containment vessels appeared through a haze on a recent summer afternoon, contrasting with the gentle valley of sunflower and wheat fields and rolling hills along the Dnipro River.

Zaporizhzhia has its own radioactive waste storage system, which was established in 1999 with Western backing as a way to end reliance on Russian reprocessing of spent fuel.

That storage site poses an especially disastrous risk today.

Given the sensitive nature of the work, nuclear power plants are meant to abide by seven pillars of safety — ensuring the plant's physical integrity, keeping safety systems fully functional, maintaining a staff free of undue pressure, preserving reliable logistical chains, monitoring on-site and off-site radiation and sustaining reliable communications with outside regulators.

Nearly all those principles are now being violated, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

"The main condition for operating a nuclear plant is calm," said Dmytro Gortenko, a human resources executive who worked in the plant's administration building. "It should always be calm," he continued. "Right up to having everything calm at home, in an employee's home life. When a person is calm, he makes better decisions. In a state of tension or fear, a person makes mistakes."

Mr. Gortenko has worked at the plant for 21 years, rising from being an engineer to overseeing the licensing for reactor operators. For him, like many others, work at the plant was a family affair. His father had been a guard, and his mother a librarian for technical documents, the same position his wife also held.

The city and the plant functioned in sync. There were regular safety drills at the plant and for those living and working nearby.

Mr. Gortenko and other employees rode the company buses to the work, passed a security checkpoint by swiping a card and changed into uniforms — white for scientists, gray for supervisors, blue or black for others. Workers ate at company cafeterias.

Each “block,” or reactor and machine room complex, required about 600 employees, he said. They worked in three eight-hour shifts that rotated from morning to evening to overnight, usually scheduled months in advance.

The culture was one of vigilance and attention to detail, he said. Even minor accidents were meticulously documented.

Like a sleeping giant, the plant and its perilous reactors were kept free of all disturbances.

But the plant’s occupation by armed Russian forces while fighting rages outside is not an emergency they had anticipated.

### **A Descent Into Chaos and Fear**

Mr. Gortenko was there that March night when the Russians stormed the plant. When the shooting was over, he arrived to find half the windows in his building shattered from shrapnel and gunfire.

An icy wind blew through the offices.

Workers taped plastic over the broken panes and resumed their duties. Russian soldiers, he said, appeared from time to time. At first, he did not see them threatening workers, but they were armed.

By spring, however, the employees were entering the plant under the watchful eye of Russian snipers, according to messages shared with The Times.

“Russian snipers take positions on the roofs of the station’s buildings,” was the message sent to Olha, the engineer. “The employees are literally working at gunpoint.”

An estimated 500 Russian soldiers are at the plant, according to witnesses and a Western official. They are believed to be members of the Rosgvardiya, according to the senior Western official, who have a reputation for brutality.

When they arrived, the Russian soldiers tore down the town’s flag — along with a Ukrainian flag flying above City Hall — and put in its place the Russian tricolor and the hammer and sickle of the former Soviet Union, according to residents.

Residents say the Russians have been seen drinking, looting and detaining anyone for expressing even a whiff of protest. Across the close-knit company town, people shut themselves at home as stories of friends gone missing multiplied.

“There was a case where a person was taken into the forest and they shot near him” in a mock execution, Mr. Gortenko said of a detainee’s ordeal he had heard about through relatives. “They had lists of people.”

“I personally know one man who went missing in March, and there is no information about him,” said Olha, the engineer. “Another man was taken to the commandant’s office for interrogation and beaten to death.”

After the young man was killed, she said, the Russians called his mother and told her to come collect his body.



The repression has grown alongside partisan resistance to the Russian occupation in town, adding to the swirl of violence. On May 22, Andrii Shevchyk, whom the Russians had installed as mayor, [was injured in a bombing outside his apartment](#).

The next day, Russian soldiers showed up at the front door of Mr. Shvets, the metalworker, and shot him. Mr. Shvets said he had no connection to any organized insurgency but he did staff the barricades, along with hundreds of other plant workers, as Russians approached the city.

Harried, fearful for their families, employees at the nuclear plant nonetheless turned up for work in the reactor control rooms, pumping stations and turbine compartments.

As the Russians tightened their grip on the plant and the city, officials at Energoatom, the Ukrainian company that oversees [the nation's 15 nuclear reactors](#), made a decision to allow some nonessential staff to leave.

In April, the company also decided to distribute its entire stockpile of potassium iodide, a drug that can protect people from radiation-induced thyroid cancer.

The Ukrainian authorities are also revising evacuation plans for about 400,000 people living in Ukrainian-controlled territory that would most likely be in the radiation fallout zone in the event of a meltdown.

Combat has returned to the plant again, with artillery shells striking the station grounds. Explosions are heard frequently, employees say.

On Monday, Ukrainian officials said that there had been shelling again near the plant and that a man had been killed and several others injured when Russian soldiers opened fire on their car at close range.

The violence has set off a desperate exodus of those living there, and on whom the peaceful functioning of the plant depends.

“Many of those who are still working would like to leave, as well,” Olha said.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Agony: Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/aug/23/five-years-rohingya-refugees-2017-bangladesh-myanmar-military-crackdown">https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/aug/23/five-years-rohingya-refugees-2017-bangladesh-myanmar-military-crackdown</a>
GIST	<p>In the 31 years since Anuara Begum’s family moved into their bamboo shelter in the Nayapara refugee camp, the only improvement they could make was replacing its tarpaulin roof with tin sheeting – less flimsy but hammer-loud when the rains come.</p> <p>Running from Myanmar’s military, their new home was built to be temporary, and so it proved when it took just 30 minutes for a fire last year to incinerate the metal and bamboo structures of a whole block of the camp.</p> <p>Fires in the camp have become commonplace in the <a href="#">five years</a> since 700,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh, the August 2017 wave joining the approximately 300,000 already there from previous security crackdowns by the Myanmar military.</p> <p>The conditions those refugees now endure – living in fragile shelters, banned from education, work and travel – have been faced by several generations, who have run for decades from violence and discrimination at the hands of the Myanmar government.</p> <p>Begum, 23, was born in Bangladesh without any prospect of a safe return to the Myanmar she has never seen.</p>

“We have no peace of mind. The camp is like an open prison for us. Most people suffer with depression and trauma,” she says. “Since I was born, I have faced constant hardship. I have spent my entire life as a refugee, since 1999, and still I can’t find peace.

“I cry when I see a fire. My family can’t sleep properly through the night because of our fear after the fire. My neighbours are constantly scared.”

Rohingya people and aid workers say the refugees who arrived five years ago have been abandoned to the same fate as those before them, accusing the humanitarian agencies of decades of failure to ensure basic rights or to secure a safe return.

One senior aid worker for an international NGO said the UN had consistently failed to challenge the Bangladeshi government over restrictive policies such as the demand that all homes be temporary, its restrictions on education and movement and the relocation of tens of thousands of people to Bhasan Char, an island camp vulnerable to extreme weather.

“Basic shelter standards have not been met, and every year the camp burns down,” he said, asking for anonymity.

“They often blame climate change for this, which is, frankly, bollocks. The fault for those fires is on the UNHCR [UN refugee agency] and IOM [International Organization for Migration]. And they should be held accountable. Where the government has put punitive measures in place, they’ve never been challenged.”

He said the Rohingya posed no significant security threat in Bangladesh, which should ensure more humane conditions.

“It has been a failure and, on the five-year mark, the UN has to be close to saying that it’s failed. They won’t – they’ll say we did our best, and look at all of the things we’ve done. But they’ve essentially created a prison camp in Cox’s Bazar ... it’s insane when you think about it.”

Another frontline worker said humanitarian agencies are too concerned about maintaining good relationships with the government so they can continue operating in Bangladesh. “They’re very much reliant on those good relationships with the government and it was my impression that they value those relationships and development programmes more than the rights of Rohingya, who were not allowed to leave, to work or receive education,” he said.

At least 7,000 Rohingya were killed in Myanmar’s Rakhine state over several weeks of “clearance operations” by the military, which began on 25 August 2017. Described as “a textbook example of ethnic cleansing” by the UN, the attacks were ostensibly to remove the fringe Rohingya armed group Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, but targeted civilians instead. The military, and ethnic Rakhine villagers, used killing, arson and rape to drive hundreds of thousands of people to Bangladesh. The UN called it genocide.

Such violence is not new. It was employed by the military in 1978 and 1991, creating similar but smaller refugee crises. Both times, Bangladesh carried out repatriation campaigns to force people back, with apparently little international resistance.

A report, prepared in 2010 but never published, about the UNHCR’s role in the camps and during the repatriations, said that in 1978 and during the 1990s the agency “departed the furthest from its protection mandate and principles in any of its operations worldwide”.

According to that report, seen by the Guardian, the agency cooperated with the government in repatriation efforts during the 1990s, despite concerns about lack of consent, intimidation and, on one occasion, a group of Rohingya being forced at gunpoint to board boats.

A researcher who produced a separate report for the US Congress at the time said that, when invited by UNHCR to witness a repatriation, they were shocked to see Rohingya burst into tears when told they were being returned to Myanmar.

The UN report also noted that Rohingya faced the same violence and controls when they were returned to Myanmar. Some found their home villages had been taken over as military bases. They faced increased taxes and more restrictions on their movements. Many made the journey back to Bangladesh.

The report was particularly damning on the lack of involvement the Rohingya played in decision-making. It quoted a senior official who said in a meeting: “The Rohingya are primitive people. At the end of the day, they will go where they are told to go.”

Rohingya people have repeatedly complained at not being consulted in the repatriation process, including when the UN signed a memorandum of understanding with Myanmar which did not address their main demand – the restoration of citizenship rights stripped away in 1982.

UNHCR spokesperson Regina de la Portilla said it will ensure any future repatriation is safe and that informed consent is obtained, but that the conditions in Myanmar are not currently suitable for a return. “It’s clear that, this time around, the return needs to be voluntary, safe and sustainable, and that it can only happen if the basic rights and the human rights of the Rohingya in Myanmar are ensured,” she said.

“This implies that they are granted documentation, have had services, have freedom of movement, and their safety is ensured.”

A lack of opportunity in the camps has helped feed a trafficking network that has seen tens of thousands of Rohingya trafficked from Bangladesh and Myanmar to Malaysia. In 2015, the Thai government discovered mass graves at one of the jungle camps where refugees had been held captive.

The trafficking network seemed dormant for several years after that but is now active again, with reports of boats arriving into southeast Asia. Last week, the Indonesian navy had to retrieve a sinking boat carrying more than 100 people.

Rohingya complain that insecurity has spiralled in the camps, fuelled by armed gangs vying for dominance. Last year, the most prominent Rohingya civil society leader, Mohib Ullah, was assassinated in his office. Two other leaders were shot dead in the camps last week.

Speaking at Nayapara refugee camp, Anuara Begum says gang members have threatened to abduct her if she continues to work with NGOs and advocate for girls’ education. “They said I’m a bad influence for the community. The miscreants threatened to kidnap me if go outside any more,” she says.

“I fear them now, and can only secretly go outside. I already feel dead inside.”

All Bangladesh’s attempts to begin repatriations have failed, with no refugees signing up willingly to return. Last year’s military coup in Myanmar means the country is no safer for the Rohingya than in 2017.

Progress towards justice has also been slow. A genocide case against Myanmar, taken by the Gambia to the UN’s International Courts of Justice, moved beyond the preliminary stage in a recent ruling, but the investigation by the international criminal court into forced deportations by the military has been slower.

Evidence gathered by the Commission for International Justice and Accountability, and submitted to the ICC investigation, indicated that there was evidence the Myanmar military had for years planned operations to expel the Rohingya.

De la Portilla said the UNCHR has tried to improve conditions within the temporary response framework set out by the government, with better sanitary systems, the ability to respond to fires, and gradually

	<p>rolling out limited secondary education. But funding has become a major barrier, especially when global prices have soared for key items like gas, which prevents refugees having to cut firewood.</p> <p>Khin Maung leads the camp-based Rohingya Youth Association. He says UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet told the refugees at a meeting last week that conditions are not right for repatriation. “The military regime has no plan to take back Rohingya, it just shows fake willingness on social media to get legitimacy from the international community and Bangladesh government,” he says.</p> <p>“[Meanwhile], the conditions in the camps are not good. Nothing is changing at all and violence is increasing.</p> <p>“The Rohingya community must start political activism for self-determination. We have the right to struggle for our ethnic rights like other minority communities in their areas. Why not for our community? The solution is in our hands.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 China ramps up pressure on Taiwan</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/22/china-ramps-pressure-taiwan-after-controversial-us/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/22/china-ramps-pressure-taiwan-after-controversial-us/</a>
GIST	<p>Chinese naval forces showed no signs of let-up Monday against Taiwan, flying warplanes again close to the self-ruled island days after a pair of controversial U.S. congressional visits that infuriated Beijing.</p> <p>People’s Liberation Army warships and warplanes sharply escalated what Pentagon officials have called coercive military activities near Taiwan beginning in early August, following the visit to Taipei by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.</p> <p>But instead of a falling off of military activities after a second congressional delegation to the island last week, the PLA is maintaining an aggressive tempo of naval and air activities.</p> <p>Taiwan’s Defense Ministry said Monday that five PLA warships and 15 aircraft were spotted “around our surrounding region” Monday. The five warships have been near the island since Friday, when six warships were spotted, the ministry said.</p> <p>Large numbers of warplanes have been flying at Taiwan since earlier in the month, with as many 51 aircraft flights detected on Aug. 18.</p> <p>“We condemn [the] PLA for jeopardizing the peace and security of our surrounding region with announcements of military drills,” the defense ministry said.</p> <p>The Biden administration has criticized the stepped up Chinese military activity but stopped short of issuing a condemnation. U.S. officials say American policy regarding Taiwan’s status has not changed and Beijing is “overreacting.”</p> <p>But the administration fears taking a tougher posture toward China could lead to a conflict, a policy that has been used by Beijing propaganda outlets to argue that heightened tensions are a way to influence U.S. policy in China’s favor.</p> <p>The stepped-up Chinese military campaign appears to be a new level of activity that was present only periodically in the past, analysts say. In the past, China’s military did not station warships around the island and while the PLA made regular warplane flights, the flights were fewer in number than the current coercion campaign.</p> <p>The official Xinhua news agency reported Sunday that military and political countermeasures announced after the Pelosi visit are the fault of the United States.</p>

“It was the United States who incited the trouble, created the crisis and escalated the situation,” Xinhua said. “Now the troublemaker who orchestrated the malicious provocation is playing the victim and putting the blame on China.”

Colin Kahl, U.S. undersecretary of defense for policy, said recently that China had manufactured a “crisis” with coercive war games around Taiwan after the House speaker’s visit.

“We continue to have a one-China policy and we continue to object to any unilateral change in the status quo, whether that be from [China] or from Taiwan,” Mr. Kahl recently told reporters. “So really, China’s reaction was completely unnecessary.”

Taiwan military forces monitored the military activities and responded with aircraft interceptors, naval vessels near the Chinese warships and activating land-based missile defense systems, the ministry said on Twitter. Aerial activity included flights by Su-30, J-10, J-11, J-16 and JH-7 fighter jets. The J-11 and J-16 are copies of the Russian Su-27.

The Chinese air force also sent two Y-8 reconnaissance aircraft in the latest sorties.

Eleven of the Chinese jets crossed the median-line down the 100-mile Taiwan Strait and entered the air defense identification zone used by the Taiwan military to monitor aerial threats.

Taiwanese defense officials have said crossing the median line is a violation of the fragile status quo between China and Taiwan that has kept the peace for some 60 years.

The PLA navy also announced Saturday that two newly-deployed Type 055 large destroyers are involved in exercises near Taiwan, the Chinese Communist Party-affiliated Global Times reported Monday. In addition to Taiwan-targeted moves, the two warships will be used for future naval operations aimed at “island chain-breaking far sea operations like encircling Japan and patrolling near Alaska.”

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HEADLINE	08/23 Day 181 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/23/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-181-of-the-invasion">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/23/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-181-of-the-invasion</a>
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Russia has <a href="#">accused Ukraine’s intelligence services</a> of carrying out the <a href="#">murder of Darya Dugina</a>, the daughter of an ultra-nationalist Russian ideologue. Russia’s FSB security service published information and a video it said showed a Ukrainian woman from the country’s Azov regiment was responsible for the murder. The Guardian reports <a href="#">the claim lacks credibility</a>.</li><li>• The UN’s secretary-general, António Guterres, has demanded a halt to “nuclear sabre-rattling” on Monday, saying the world is at a “maximum moment of danger” and all countries with nuclear weapons must make a commitment to “no first-use”. The UN chief described the situation at Ukraine’s Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, Europe’s largest, as critical. Shelling and fighting in the area continues.</li><li>• Moscow has requested a UN security council meeting be held on Tuesday to discuss the Zaporizhzhia plant, Russian state-owned news agency RIA reported, citing deputy ambassador to the UN Dmitry Polyanskiy.</li><li>• Ukrainian soldiers who were taken prisoner after the battle for Mariupol have accused Russian forces of torture during their captivity. The soldiers, who were from the Azov regiment and released as part of a prisoner exchange, told reporters they saw soldiers that were beaten until their bones were broken. “Some had needles inserted into their wounds, some were tortured with water,” said Vladyslav Zhaivoronok, who lost a leg. “They undressed us, forced to squat while we are naked. If any of the boys raised their heads, they began to beat them immediately,” added Denys Chepurko.</li><li>• The sole bridge across the strategic Dnieper River in the Russian-occupied city of Kherson was reportedly hit by US-supplied high-precision HIMARS rockets injuring 15 people, a source</li></ul>

told Russia's Interfax news agency. The bridge is a key crossing for Russian military transport in the region.

- **Three villages in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region were battered by Russian artillery and multiple rocket launchers** on Monday. Soledar, Zaytseve and Bilohorivka near the city of Bakhmut were struck, killing at least two civilians, Ukrainian authorities said.
- **Nearly 9,000 Ukrainian military personnel have been killed in the war** with Russia, the head of Ukraine's armed forces, general Valeriy Zaluzhnyi, said on Monday. The office of the UN high commissioner for human rights said on Monday **5,587 civilians had been killed and 7,890 wounded** between 24 February and 21 August, mainly from artillery, rocket and missile attacks.
- **The US has [rejected Ukraine's call for a blanket ban on visas for Russians](#)**, saying Washington would not want to close off pathways to refuge for Russia's dissidents and others who are vulnerable to human rights abuses. The **EU's chief diplomat, Josep Borrell, also said he opposes a complete ban** on visas for Russians.
- **The German chancellor says he is working fast to [find alternatives to Russian gas](#)**. Olaf Scholz said he aims to extricate Germany from its dependence on Russian gas and pursue new energy supplies. Scholz met Canada's prime minister, [Justin Trudeau](#), in Montreal on Monday. The two leaders are set to sign a deal for Canada to supply clean hydrogen to Germany.
- **Ukraine has restored a rail link to neighbouring Moldova** which could carry 10m tonnes of freight a year, president Volodymyr Zelenskiy said. The 22km (12 mile) line runs from western Ukraine to Moldova. Ukraine's infrastructure minister, Oleksander Kubrakov, said the link would provide an alternative route from the Black Sea port of Odesa.
- **Ukraine's agricultural exports are likely to rise to about 4m tonnes in August, from 3m tonnes in July**, a deputy chair of the Ukrainian agrarian council said. The uptick is due to a UN-brokered deal that unblocked Ukrainian seaports.
- **Europe faces fresh disruption to energy supplies due to damage to a pipeline system bringing oil from Kazakhstan through Russia** that was reported by the pipeline operator on Monday. Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) said exports from two of its three mooring points at a Black Sea terminal had been suspended.
- **A senior Russian diplomat has ruled out a diplomatic solution to ending the war in Ukraine**. Gennady Gatilov, Russia's permanent representative to the UN in Geneva, told the [Financial Times](#) that there would be no direct talks between Vladimir Putin and Volodymyr Zelenskiy, adding that Moscow expects a prolonged conflict.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 US rejects Ukraine call to ban Russian visas</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/aug/22/us-rejects-russians-visa-ban-ukraine">https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/aug/22/us-rejects-russians-visa-ban-ukraine</a>
GIST	<p>The United States has rebuffed Ukraine's demand for a blanket visa ban on Russians, saying Washington would not want to close off pathways to refuge for Russia's dissidents and others who are vulnerable to human rights abuses.</p> <p>The Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, had first urged the visa ban in an interview earlier this month with the Washington Post, saying Russians should "live in their own world until they change their philosophy".</p> <p>Zelenskiy then issued another call a few weeks ago for <a href="#">European Union states to ban visas for Russian nationals</a> to keep the bloc from becoming a "supermarket" open to anyone with the means to enter.</p> <p>But on Monday, a state department spokesperson said the Biden administration had already imposed visa restrictions for Kremlin officials but it made it clear that its focus would be on identifying those involved in Russia's invasion of Ukraine and holding them accountable.</p> <p>"The US wouldn't want to close off pathways to refuge and safety for Russia's dissidents or others who are vulnerable to human rights abuses," the spokesperson said.</p> <p>"We've also been clear that it is important to draw a line between the actions of the Russian government and its policies in Ukraine, and the people of Russia," the spokesperson added.</p>



	Some EU leaders such as the Finnish prime minister, Sanna Marin, and her Estonian counterpart, Kaja Kallas, have called for an EU-wide visa ban. The German chancellor, Olaf Scholz, opposed this on Monday, saying Russians should be able to flee their home country if they disagree with the regime.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Torrential rains lash South, Southwest</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/aug/22/south-west-us-flood-warnings-torrential-rains">https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/aug/22/south-west-us-flood-warnings-torrential-rains</a>
GIST	<p>Millions of Americans are under flood warnings after heavy rain this weekend in a large portion of the south and south-western US, where high waters submerged vehicles in <a href="#">Texas</a> and swept hikers in Arizona off their feet.</p> <p>Government meteorologists issued flood warnings for <a href="#">more than 13 million people</a> after torrential rainfall created life-threatening conditions in a region including north-east Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas and New Mexico.</p> <p>On Monday, rains across the drought-stricken Dallas-Fort Worth area caused streets to flood, submerging vehicles as officials warned motorists to stay off the roads and water seeped into some homes and businesses.</p> <p>“I was able to back up on a ramp to get off the highway,” Cassondra Anna Mae Stewart said <a href="#">to CNN</a> of her experience. “I took an alternate route home ... although most streets are flooded down there as well.”</p> <p>Some parts of Dallas saw more than nearly 10 inches of rain within 24 hours, and hundreds of flights in and out of Dallas-Fort Worth international airport were delayed or cancelled.</p> <p>“The Dallas-Fort Worth area was pretty much ground zero for the heaviest rain overnight,” said Daniel Huckaby, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service.</p> <p>Elsewhere, Arizona and New Mexico were also affected by flood warnings, with more than 10 million people under flood watches as of Saturday night, <a href="#">reports ABC News</a>. Monsoons in Arizona flooded roads in the state’s East Valley region, creating hazardous driving conditions, reported CBS 5, <a href="#">an Arizona news affiliate</a>.</p> <p>Authorities are still searching for an Arizona woman who was swept away at Utah’s Zion national park three days earlier, as flooding surged through the south-western United States and imperiled tourists visiting the region’s scenic parks.</p> <p>Rangers at Zion national park said Monday that they had expanded their search for Jetal Agnihotri, a 29-year-old from Tucson, Arizona, southward, to areas surrounding the Virgin River just outside the park. Her brother told a local television station she could not swim.</p> <p>Agnihotri was among a group of hikers who were swept away by floodwaters rushing through a popular hiking location in one of the park’s many slot canyons. Both the National Weather Service and Washington county, Utah, had issued flood warnings for the area that day.</p> <p>All of the hikers except Agnihotri were found on high ground and were rescued after water levels receded. Over the weekend severe flooding also trapped about 200 people in the Carlsbad Caverns national park in south-eastern <a href="#">New Mexico</a> on Saturday night.</p> <p>Rain in New Mexico flooded two major roads in the state’s south-eastern area. Police in the city of Dexter rescued one local man who was stranded on the roof of his car after flood waters swept his vehicle off the road, <a href="#">reported KRQE</a>, a local news affiliate.</p>

	<p>In several areas, much of this weekend's rainfall and subsequent flooding comes after severe drought. Many of the affected areas have limited protection against flooding caused by rainfall.</p> <p>Prior to rain on 9 August, Dallas had gone 67 days with no rainfall, according to the <a href="#">Washington Post</a>. Western states, including Arizona, are currently dealing with droughts that <a href="#">threaten the water supply</a> in the Colorado river, one of the state's largest reservoirs.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Crimea, Russia bastion, reveals weakness</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/crimea-once-a-bastion-of-russian-power-now-reveals-its-weakness-11661172262?mod=hp_lead_pos5">https://www.wsj.com/articles/crimea-once-a-bastion-of-russian-power-now-reveals-its-weakness-11661172262?mod=hp_lead_pos5</a>
GIST	<p>For generations, Crimea has anchored Russia's military power in the Black Sea. Russian President <a href="#">Vladimir Putin</a> vowed that it would remain Russian forever after he <a href="#">annexed it in 2014</a>. But a spate of explosions and drone incursions in recent days also shows the extent of its vulnerability on the peninsula, and how it is now part of Ukraine's own war goals.</p> <p>The strikes deep inside the Russian-occupied territory, including on <a href="#">the headquarters</a> of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol, have disrupted Moscow's plans to drive further into southern Ukraine, military analysts and officials said, potentially forcing a rethink of its broader strategy.</p> <p>Since the start of the invasion, Crimea and the Black Sea Fleet have served as an important hub for supplying forces, equipment and firepower to support Russia's occupation of southern Ukraine, where towns and cities quickly fell to Russian forces in the first days with barely a shot fired. From there, Russia has launched volleys of cruise missiles into Ukrainian towns, cities and military installations. Crimea was also seen as a crucial element in Moscow's plans to push further west to Odessa and create a landbridge to Moldova.</p> <p>But a Ukrainian drone that found its way to the heavily fortified headquarters of the Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol on Saturday underscores Russia's weakness on the strategically crucial territory. Previous <a href="#">explosions at the Saki air base</a> in Crimea earlier this month put more than half of the Black Sea Fleet's naval aviation combat jets out of use, according to a Western official. It isn't clear what caused that explosion.</p> <p>"It's a game changer if Saki and Sevastopol can be hit," said John Spencer, chair of urban warfare studies at the Madison Policy Forum. "These strikes are attriting logistics, command and control and ultimately the capabilities of the Black Sea Fleet itself."</p> <p>The Western official said that since the recent explosions, Russia's Black Sea fleet is struggling to function as anything more than a coastal defense flotilla that occasionally conducts missile strikes. The hits have also all but upended any designs Russia had to launch <a href="#">an amphibious assault</a> on Odessa, he said.</p> <p>The U.K.'s Ministry of Defense said that the blasts, together with the <a href="#">earlier loss of Moscow's flagship Moskva</a>, had put the fleet on a defensive posture, forcing it to keep within sight of the Crimean coast.</p> <p>Since the start of the invasion, Crimea has been a reliably safe rear base to oversee Russia's occupation of the territory along Ukraine's southern coast, but Mr. Spencer said the recent strikes have weakened the security bubble of radar and air power the fleet had built around itself to act with impunity in the Black Sea. Russia could now be thinking about options to temporarily move the fleet's remaining ships elsewhere, potentially creating new logistical headaches for Moscow, he said.</p> <p>While Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's government is far from launching an offensive on Crimea, it says it <a href="#">wants to take back the peninsula</a> after Russia seized it following the ouster of a pro-Russian president in Kyiv. Part of Ukraine since the Soviet era, Crimea had always been a strategically important territory for Moscow, which had based its Black Sea Fleet there since the days of the Russian Empire.</p>

“One can literally feel in the air of Crimea that the occupation there is temporary, and Ukraine is returning,” Mr. Zelensky said on Saturday.

How these strikes will work into [a broader counteroffensive](#) against the Russians in the south has yet to be seen. Kyiv’s immediate goal is to push Russian troops out of Kherson, one of the few territories Moscow has occupied west of the Dnipro River. Ukrainian forces have focused on hitting supply lines and bridges over the river to isolate Russian troops there in the hope they will pull back.

Velina Tchakarova, director of the Austria Institute for European and Security Policy, said the blasts may not be heralding a broad military counteroffensive, but could be part of a policy of eroding Russian capabilities with the weapons at hand.

“In the absence of Ukraine’s abilities to conduct a major counteroffensive, Ukraine is degrading Russia’s abilities and sense of security to the best of its abilities. It’s a situation of corrosion,” she said.

Regardless, the strikes are having a significant psychological effect on the Russian leadership, the Western official said.

The drone strike on one of the Russian military’s most heavily-fortified bases made it as important symbolically as it was operationally. Ukrainian officials didn’t immediately comment on the Black Sea incident, but they have hinted at involvement in a string of previous blasts.

Russia says Ukraine has deployed drones to various bases across the peninsula in recent weeks, activating air defense systems in places such as Yevpatoria, where the Russian-backed governor of Crimea, Sergei Aksyonov, said the Russian Defense Ministry shot down all the targets over the peninsula.

Military analysts say the strikes indicate how Ukraine is gaining a better understanding of how Russian air defenses work and is also now able to make effective use of intelligence and weapons provided by Western countries—a crucial step for a military almost dependent on U.S. and European-supplied weaponry.

“They are finally showing that weapons deliveries make sense and make a difference on the battleground,” said Ms. Tchakarova. “Right now that makes all the difference.”

This capability to [launch deeper strikes](#) means Ukraine is walking a delicate line between undermining Russia’s sense of security on the peninsula without inflicting losses that could be used to drum up support for a broader military mobilization across the Russian heartland.

Analysts feel so far that line hasn’t been crossed, but the attacks have managed to burst the carefully managed flow of information Russian citizens get about the war. Following explosions earlier in the month when a weapons depot exploded next to summer tourists, Russians began to leave Crimea in droves, causing miles-long lines of traffic to cross the Kerch Bridge to enter mainland Russia.

“They’ve spent decades working to control information the Russians receive, but you just can’t hide a mushroom cloud,” said Mr. Spencer.

On Monday, the governor of Sevastopol posted videos of himself inspecting bomb shelters to his personal Telegram channel.

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HEADLINE	08/22 British Airways cuts 10,000 summer flights
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/british-airways-to-cut-over-10-000-flights-as-industry-woes-threaten-to-stretch-through-winter-11661191576?mod=hp_list_pos1">https://www.wsj.com/articles/british-airways-to-cut-over-10-000-flights-as-industry-woes-threaten-to-stretch-through-winter-11661191576?mod=hp_list_pos1</a>

GIST	<p>LONDON—<a href="#">British Airways</a> is cutting more than 10,000 flights through the rest of the summer flying season and into the winter, threatening to extend the aviation industry’s chaotic postpandemic recovery in Europe into next year.</p> <p>The airline said it is cutting flights to comply with an extension of London Heathrow Airport’s cap on departing passengers. It has also revised down its flying schedule from <a href="#">November through March</a>, consolidating same-day flights to destinations and offering to rebook affected passengers on other airlines according to availability, it said in a statement Monday.</p> <p>British Airways, a unit of International Consolidated Airlines Group SA, said it would scrap more than 1,200 domestic and intra-European flights through October—about 24 a day. Another 10,000 are being canceled through the winter season. That excludes additional long-haul cancellations that the airline has already made. In total, the cuts represent about 8% of its total winter flying plans.</p> <p>British Airways, similar to airlines across Europe and the U.S., has struggled to increase its capacity to meet a faster-than-expected resurgence in travel demand following the relaxation of pandemic-era travel restrictions and border controls. The industry has strained to bring back enough staff across airports, ground handlers and at carriers to meet demand, which has led to one of the <a href="#">most disruptive flying seasons</a> in history.</p> <p>The pain has been worse in Europe. The disruption—including thousands of last-minute cancellations, delays, <a href="#">lost baggage</a>, and long lines through check-in and security at the world’s busiest airports—has led to drastic action within the industry, including the imposing of monthslong passenger caps at hubs in London, Frankfurt and Amsterdam.</p> <p>London Heathrow said last week that it would extend its cap, which <a href="#">restricts daily departing passenger numbers</a> to 100,000, until Oct. 29. Frankfurt and Amsterdam Schiphol Airport have also extended their own restrictions through autumn to help alleviate some of the staffing pressure points at each hub.</p> <p>Heathrow said that the caps, which were originally due to lift on Sept. 11, are working. Data from FlightAware shows reductions in cancellations and delays at each of those European hubs since the peak of the disruption in June and July.</p> <p>British Airways, the biggest operator at Heathrow, will continue to <a href="#">limit ticket sales</a> on some flights where necessary to meet the airport’s flying restrictions. The carrier had previously restricted sales on all intra-European flights to ensure it complied with the airport’s measures.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Study: Seattle soda tax can improve equity</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://crosscut.com/equity/2022/08/study-finds-seattles-controversial-soda-tax-can-improve-equity">https://crosscut.com/equity/2022/08/study-finds-seattles-controversial-soda-tax-can-improve-equity</a>
GIST	<p>Despite fierce and deeply funded opposition to the tune of <a href="#">more than \$30 million</a> from the beverage industry, <a href="#">eight cities</a> — from Philadelphia and Boulder to Seattle and San Francisco — have successfully levied taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages.</p> <p>Soda and other sugar-sweetened beverages are the <a href="#">leading source of added sugar in U.S. diets and are associated with</a> diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease and early death. Through taxes that average 1 to 2 cents per ounce, which are levied against distributors and passed on to consumers <a href="#">70% of the time</a>, these taxes have so far successfully increased prices and ultimately reduced demand for sugary drinks without industry job loss.</p> <p>While researchers are still waiting to see whether or not these taxes will have an impact on these critical public health outcomes, soda taxes are already making an impact in another area: equitable programmatic spending of the revenue they bring in.</p> <p>Last month, researchers at the University of Washington and University of Pennsylvania published a <a href="#">study on the economic benefits of sweetened beverage taxes</a>. Ultimately, the study found that</p>

sweetened beverage taxes have resulted in the transfer of funds to lower-income populations in all three cities they studied: Philadelphia, Seattle and San Francisco.

“When we set out to do this study, there was already a fair amount of research that has evaluated the effects of sugary drink taxes,” explains University of Washington epidemiologist Jim Krieger, one of the study authors and previously a co-chair of Seattle’s Sweetened Beverage Tax Community Advisory Board. Like tobacco taxes, raising the price of unhealthy products leads to a decrease in consumption and, hopefully, better health outcomes.

“As the [sweetened beverage taxes] started and became more prominent, the other side of the equation became more and more interesting,” Krieger notes. “Taxes raise revenues. If they’re invested properly, they can provide a way to further public health and community health goals.”

But that all depends on what the revenue from these taxes is spent on. So, Krieger and his colleagues set out to find out whether or not these taxes are fair.

First, they looked at spending. Because sweetened beverage taxes are flat taxes like sales taxes — everyone pays the same amount regardless of income, property ownership or other variables — the first question was if these taxes place an unfair burden on low-income people.

Across each of the three cities that the researchers looked at, the researchers found that “there was no difference between the dollar amount spent by high-income households in a year versus low-income households,” Krieger says. While the group did find that low-income households spend a higher percentage of their income on beverage taxes, the actual amount of money spent was the same per capita across income levels.

More importantly, though, the researchers found that, while low-income households pay a higher percentage of their income on these taxes, they’re also the primary recipients of the revenues that sugary beverage taxes produce. This means that while people across income levels are spending the same amount of money on these taxes, low-income households are benefiting most from them.

“We looked at revenue allocations in each city, line item by line item, to see what kinds of programs were being invested in or funded and who benefited from them,” Krieger explains. They examined whether or not a given program was restricted to people with lower incomes and whether or not a program operated predominantly in low-income neighborhoods. “When we looked at that, in all three cities there was essentially a transfer for tax money from higher-income households to lower-income households. In every city, lower-income households got more back in benefits than they paid out in taxes,” he adds.

In Seattle, for example, lower-income households spent about \$6 million annually on sweetened beverage taxes, but they received \$12.5 million in benefits through programs funded by the tax. Higher-income households, on the other hand, paid about \$16 million in taxes while receiving just \$3.1 million in benefits — “a lot less than the low-income folks,” Krieger notes.

“The bottom line is that ... because of the way revenues are allocated, they provide financial benefits to low-income households. By that definition, they’re a progressive tax policy because they shift resources from higher income households to lower income ones.”

It’s that promise that helped Philadelphia’s current mayoral administration successfully pass a sugary beverage tax after two previously failed attempts. Jim Engler, the chief of staff for Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney, explains that policymakers tied the messaging of the tax to not only health benefits, but the funding benefits it would produce for early childhood education in the form of community schools and pre-kindergarten.

Philadelphia’s first cohort of nine community schools launched in July 2016, while the city’s pre-K program launched with 2,000 seats in January 2017, the same month that the city’s beverage tax took

effect. Today the city has 4,300 pre-K seats and 20 community schools, thanks in part to the city's beverage tax.

"We're launching three new community schools this year from zip codes that have high rates of gun violence, out-of-home child welfare placement, and low school attendance," Engler says. "We're also targeting low-income zip codes for our pre-K program — 85% of the kids in our program are non-white and 71% are living at 300% below the poverty line."

Naturally, the key to ensuring such programmatic benefits is tax revenue dedication, or the earmarking of tax revenues for specific programs. Christina Wong, the public policy and advocacy director for the Washington food justice organization Northwest Harvest, explains that community feedback and ensuring that the group had a clear mission and value set to work from was key to getting to the equity that Seattle's beverage tax enjoys today.

"We worked to quickly build out a survey to do a temperature check of the organizations involved with the [committee] so we could reach out and get some input [from them]," says Wong, who was also co-chair of Seattle's soda tax advisory board with Krieger before transitioning to a regular seat. On the values front, "a key value was balancing the expertise [of research] with ... what the community says" through listening sessions, for example.

One of the funding outcomes has been supporting [Seattle's Fresh Bucks program](#) that helps lower-income people buy more fruit and vegetables at grocery stores and farmers markets. More than 12,000 Seattle households enrolled in the program receive \$40 or more to spend on fruits and vegetables; most of these low-income households are people of color or undocumented immigrants.

Researchers say they hope other cities interested in implementing sweetened beverage taxes will look at what these three cities have done to ensure the tax revenue is being invested into communities that have faced disproportionate health effects of these sugary drinks.

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HEADLINE	08/22 Weekend boat crashes stir safety concerns
SOURCE	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/local/two-weekend-boat-crashes-on-puget-sound-waterways-stir-safety-concerns">https://komonews.com/news/local/two-weekend-boat-crashes-on-puget-sound-waterways-stir-safety-concerns</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — Seattle police continued their search Monday for a hit-and-run boat operator that left five people hurt over the weekend after a late night crash with another boat, authorities said.</p> <p>The Saturday night crash on Lake Washington was the second boat collisions within 24 hours on area waterways.</p> <p>The wreck occurred as Ted Dominguez, a boater with 25 years of experience on the water, was showing family and friends the city lights at night from the water.</p> <p>He said his vessel was struck out of nowhere and left stranded.</p> <p>Another boater came along and pushed Dominguez and his six passengers to shore near Madrona Beach.</p> <p>"All of the sudden this boat came on top of me," he said. "I seen black like a dark shadow, people got hurt we were totally submerged under the water (but) I'm just glad everybody is okay."</p> <p>All five injured on the boat are expected to be okay, including the woman who suffered a gash to her head.</p> <p>All five victims were transferred for treatment to Harborview Medical Center. Information about their conditions was pending.</p>



Dominguez, a father who is planning for his daughter's upcoming wedding, is beyond thankful the five injured who were hurt during the boat trip will be okay.

He was visibly shaken and just stunned that the boater who collided with his boat around 9:30 p.m., just kept going, leaving the passengers all alone and on their own Saturday night.

"I'm just glad they are okay but for somebody to run us over like that and just leave, they know what they did," Dominguez said. "I saw them stop, I thought they would come back and help us."

Anyone who sees the damaged boat was asked to call Seattle police and report it.

And that's not the only weekend collision under investigation.

Less than 24 hours after Saturday night's collision, Seattle police said a 17-year-old on a jet ski rammed into a motor boat, sending the five occupants into the water.

The boat passengers all swam to the shore and did not suffer any major injuries even though the boat they were on ended up sinking.

"That's a big surprise to me," said King County sheriff's Deputy Matthew Martin, a member of the sheriff's Marine Rescue Dive unit. "There is so much room on Lake Washington, it's such a big body of water running into another boat really requires a high level of inattention to at least one boat operator."

Dominguez described the boat that hit them as going right over top of them, which Martin said can be especially dangerous.

"It is about the most dangerous event you can have when a boat goes over top," he said. "That means a propeller is moving in space over people."

A smaller boat collided with a large boat on Lake Washington that fled the scene.

This week's hot weather could lead to more boat traffic than a typical day, especially those boaters wanting to get out before the summer boating season ends.

Martin said boating fans should be mindful of a few things, in addition to boat owners being educated and completing the required boating training, operators should start every outing with a safety briefing.

Passengers should know where to find an on-board fire extinguisher, life vests and a life ring.

"if something happens, do this, people will remember that under the stress of a collision," Martin said.

And the absolute must?

"One person on the boat has to be pay attention they don't get the day off, they need to pay attention the whole time," Martin said, "And when the sun goes down it's time to pack it up and get home before the light goes out."

Martin said most boaters limit their boating to the daylight hours and the nighttime seems to draw more experienced boaters who are often operating tours.

"We never go out on weekends or even a busy three-day weekend (and) we don't go out at night, we're always back in the slip," said Marcia Petersen, who lives in Kirkland.

She and her husband have a boat and keep it moored at Carillon Point.

	<p>Before heading out on the water Monday, the couple said they also keep their speed down, never drink and drive and keep their head on a swivel while underway.</p> <p>The Petersens said they are especially mindful of newbies on the water what with a number of nearby rental operations offer boats and jet ski for rent.</p> <p>"You can assume they may not be up to date," Petersen said.</p> <p>"Some people have never been on boat in their life, they will probably never get on a boat again," said Dominguez while referring to his passengers who were with him Saturday night.</p> <p>The rules of the water are like the rules of the road for those involved in a boat crash. The people involved cannot leave the scene and must stay on scene, a state law, Martin said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 UN faces record humanitarian aid shortfall</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/22/world/middleeast/humanitarian-aid-gap-un.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/22/world/middleeast/humanitarian-aid-gap-un.html</a>
GIST	<p>Camps for <a href="#">Syrian refugees in northern Iraq</a> have cut access to clean water, sanitation and electricity. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, many people forced from their homes face life without shelter or basic tools like fishing or farming gear. In South Sudan, there will be no secondary school this fall for some refugee children.</p> <p>Funding to ease the world's humanitarian crises is falling further than ever behind what is needed for critical requirements like shelter, food, water, power and education, the United Nations reports. Demand, already inflated by scourges like the pandemic and drought, has soared this year, driven in part by the war in Ukraine. Donations from wealthy countries have grown, but not nearly as fast.</p> <p>"This is the biggest funding gap we've ever seen, mostly because the number of vulnerable people who need support is increasing fast," said Martin Griffiths, chief of the U.N.'s humanitarian and emergency relief office, which coordinates humanitarian aid through global refugee, health, food and children's agencies. Those U.N. agencies and the private groups they work with need \$48.7 billion in 2022 to aid more than 200 million people, he said, but more than seven months into the year, they have raised <a href="#">less than one-third of that</a>.</p> <p>That bleak overview hides a stark contrast: Money for programs to help Ukrainians has been relatively plentiful. Money for people in most other parts of the world has not.</p> <p>The vast majority of the aid comes from a handful of donors — the United States, the European Union, a few individual European nations, Japan and Canada. Contributors can leave it up to the United Nations where to direct the money, but donors earmark the great majority of it for specific programs and countries.</p> <p>"It is a perfect storm with many different factors — you have the Ukraine crisis where, for domestic political reasons, a lot of major donors have to commit a lot of funding there, and then beyond that there is the normal set of crisis that have been exacerbated by Covid and climate," said Eugene Chen, a former U.N. official and an expert on the organization's finances.</p> <p>U.N. agencies "have to prioritize within their own programs," he said, and without enough money to cover every crisis, "unfortunately some needs will have to go unmet."</p> <p>The U.N. humanitarian office has asked for more than \$6 billion this year specifically to aid Ukrainians, both refugees who have fled the country and those still within it; its first Ukraine appeal raised more than the amount requested, and its second is on its way to being fully funded.</p> <p>In contrast, <a href="#">much smaller appeals</a> are 11 percent funded for Haiti, 12 percent for El Salvador, 14 percent for Burundi and 17 percent for Myanmar. For the world's biggest humanitarian crises, involving Syrians,</p>

Afghans, Yemenis and Ethiopians, funding levels are somewhat higher — but still far behind those of Ukraine.

“The war in Ukraine has illustrated, very starkly, how it is possible to rapidly and extensively mobilize support for refugees and respond to humanitarian needs — when political commitment is there,” said Kathryn Mahoney, the global spokeswoman for the U.N. refugee agency.

As a stopgap measure, the United Nations has tapped into its Emergency Response Fund, but that is not enough, and not sustainable, Mr. Griffiths said.

He said he implores donor countries to extend the same generosity to other peoples as they are showing to Ukrainians, and other U.N. officials say they regularly make the same appeal, to governments and to private foundations.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has particular geopolitical urgency, in addition to its moral impetus, for wealthy countries that might not see crises in other parts of the world as directly affecting their national interests. The United States and its allies see supporting Ukraine as key to punishing and containing Russia, cementing their alliances, and sending a message to China about the costs of aggression. At the same time, European countries are sheltering more than six million Ukrainians as they struggle with the continent’s [biggest refugee crisis since World War II](#).

But refugees and aid agencies alike have noted that the donor countries have shown [far more concern](#) for Ukraine’s overwhelmingly white and Christian populace than they have for people fleeing violence and deprivation in [the Middle East and Africa](#).

Because of the crisis in Ukraine, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has seen one of the biggest jumps in need among U.N. aid agencies, to [an estimated \\$10.7 billion this year](#). There are some 100 million displaced people in the world, up from about 39 million in 2011 — both refugees from places like Syria, Afghanistan, Myanmar and Venezuela, and those who are displaced within their own countries. Fund-raising for the agency is on track to break records — and still fall far short of the target. But that unmet need will not be felt by Ukrainians.

In all, 43 percent of the people served by the refugee agency live in just 12 nations: Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Iraq, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Chad, Yemen, Bangladesh, Jordan, Lebanon and Colombia. And in all 12 countries, its programs are running at less than 30 percent funding, forcing cuts or even suspension of vital services.

Without an additional \$1 billion this year, [the agency reported in June](#), cash assistance will be cut by nearly half, “12 percent fewer children would have access to schooling; 25 percent fewer displaced people would have access to shelter; 23 percent fewer would have access to health facilities.”

In Yemen, food rations have been cut for millions of people. In the sprawling Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan that has housed refugees from war and oppression in Syria for more than a decade, electricity has been cut to [nine hours a day](#). In [Ethiopia](#), about 750,000 refugees risk having no food by October.

Aid workers fear that in the long term, such deprivation could stunt an entire generation’s ability to build new lives.

Budgetary challenges are not new for U.N. aid agencies. Long-festering conflicts in Syria, South Sudan, Yemen, Libya, Afghanistan and elsewhere have forced millions of people from their homes, trapped for years in limbo at U.N.-operated camps.

But several factors have pushed the challenges to a new level: The Covid-19 pandemic and resulting economic shocks; the economic collapse of Afghanistan, with the Taliban takeover and the withdrawal of international aid; Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, contributing to global food shortages, and crop failures abetted by human-caused climate change.

	<p>In 2019, the United Nations pegged the need for all of its humanitarian programs at \$27.8 billion, but its fund-raising appeals fell more than \$10 billion short of that — both record highs. The next year, the target ballooned to \$38.6 billion and the shortfall to \$19.4 billion. The figures improved slightly in 2021, but jumped again this year.</p> <p>Mr. Griffiths’s office is seeking \$48.7 billion in 2022 — about \$8 billion more than it projected before the year began — and is on track to raise barely half that amount.</p> <p>“Refugees and other displaced people are being pushed to the brink,” said Ms. Mahoney, the spokeswoman for the refugee agency, known as U.N.H.C.R. “The reality is that aid agencies like U.N.H.C.R. are also having to make heartbreaking choices.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Russia hawks demand vengeance</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/22/world/europe/russia-ukraine-daria-dugina.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/22/world/europe/russia-ukraine-daria-dugina.html</a>
GIST	<p>Russian authorities accused Ukraine on Monday of assassinating an ultranationalist commentator as figures in Russia’s pro-war camp clamored for retaliation, highlighting the growing domestic political pressure that <a href="#">President Vladimir V. Putin</a> is facing six months after he ordered the invasion of Ukraine.</p> <p>The swift claim by Russia’s domestic intelligence agency to have solved the crime, and the heated demands for vengeance, pointed to the expanding influence of Russia’s ultranationalist hawks — a loose group of writers, business magnates and politicians who celebrated Mr. Putin’s war and have since grown frustrated that the Kremlin is trying to maintain a sense of normalcy at home rather than putting the nation on a war footing.</p> <p>Ukraine denied any connection to the car bombing near Moscow on Saturday that <a href="#">killed Daria Dugina</a>, 29, daughter of <a href="#">Aleksandr Dugin</a>, a political theorist who has long called for the reconquest of Ukraine and whose hawkish visions of a resurgent, imperial and anti-liberal Russia provided an intellectual framework for Mr. Putin’s aggressive foreign policy.</p> <p>The Russian intelligence agency, the F.S.B., issued a statement on Monday saying that the attack “was prepared and committed by the Ukrainian intelligence agencies” and carried out by a Ukrainian woman traveling with her young daughter, who then drove across the border into Estonia.</p> <p>Pro-Kremlin voices aimed their wrath at Estonia as well as Ukraine, suggesting that Estonia, a NATO member, was sheltering the assassin. A senior Russian lawmaker, Vladimir Dzhabarov, said that if Estonia did not hand her over, there would be “every reason for the Russian Federation to take tough actions against the Estonian state,” hinting at the possibility of an escalation in Russia’s broader conflict with the West.</p> <p>Ukraine’s presidential adviser, Mykhailo Podolyak, <a href="#">said on Twitter that</a> the F.S.B. statement was “propaganda” from a “fictional world.” Andriy Yusov, a spokesman for Ukraine’s defense intelligence agency, said in a statement, “It is a fake that Ukraine is involved in this.”</p> <p>But it was not immediately possible to verify either the allegations or the denials, as is often the case in war. Russia has shut down independent reporting and has made it a crime to dispute the Kremlin’s account of the war. Russian claims, in particular, about atrocities, provocations and battlefield setbacks have repeatedly proved false.</p> <p>Russian media speculated that Mr. Dugin, who is better known and more influential and had been with his daughter at a nationalist festival shortly before she was killed, was the intended target. But the F.S.B. said the operation was meant to kill Ms. Dugina, who had earned a following <a href="#">with frequent appearances on state media</a>.</p>

The festival had been organized by a nationalist writer, Zakhar Prilepin, who has long advocated an imperialist foreign policy by Moscow and last year was elected to Russia's Parliament — a sign of the nationalists' rising stature in Mr. Putin's system. Ms. Dugina represented a youthful face of that camp, using her own rising prominence on social media and television to cast the Ukraine war as only a part of an existential conflict [against the West's "global hegemony"](#) that Russia was destined to fight.

Mr. Putin offered his condolences to Ms. Dugina's parents in a statement, calling her "a bright, talented person" killed in a "vile, cruel crime" and posthumously awarding her Russia's Order of Courage. But he said nothing about what, if anything, the killing could mean for the war in Ukraine, where Russia's battlefield advances have stalled and where conservatives such as Mr. Dugin say Russia is fighting with insufficient intensity.

Ukrainians are bracing for a dangerous week. The country's Independence Day on Wednesday is seen as a symbolic date on which Mr. Putin could redouble his assault. Mr. Dugin, in his first public comments since his daughter's death, cast her as a martyr and called on Russia to continue fighting.

"Our hearts yearn for more than just revenge or retribution," Mr. Dugin said in a statement released by an associate, the ultranationalist business magnate Konstantin Malofeev. "We only need our victory. My daughter laid her maiden life on its altar. So win, please!"

Mr. Malofeev, who was photographed with Ms. Dugina at the festival outside Moscow just before her death, vowed that there would be a "Daria Dugina Street" in Kyiv.

"For this, we will first rebuild Kyiv and all other cities of Ukraine as part of a future Great Russia," he wrote on social media.

Mr. Putin has increasingly echoed the imperialist views of people like Mr. Dugin and Mr. Malofeev in his rhetoric and in his aggression. But he has also taken care to leave his options open, stopping short of vowing to topple President Volodymyr Zelensky or to conquer all of Ukraine.

Tatiana Stanovaya, a Russian political analyst, wrote that Ms. Dugina's murder "is serving to increase dissatisfaction with the authorities in conservative circles, who believe that the Kremlin is drawing red lines in the wrong place and is too hesitant when they are violated."

The F.S.B. said that the Ukrainian suspect entered Russia on July 23, rented an apartment in the Moscow building where Ms. Dugina lived "in order to organize the murder of Dugina and obtain information about her lifestyle" and attended the same festival on Saturday. It also released video footage that it said showed the assassin crossing the border into Estonia, driving a gray Mini Cooper.

The F.S.B.'s remarkably swift claim to have solved the killing of Ms. Dugina may not convince those who are skeptical of an agency once headed by Mr. Putin that, in previous cases, had been much slower to identify suspects or never did. After the deaths of the journalist Anna Politkovskaya in 2006 and the opposition leader [Boris Nemtsov](#) in 2015, the authorities eventually charged and tried groups of people they accused of carrying out the killings, but not those who hired or directed them.

Like its Soviet-era predecessor, the K.G.B., the F.S.B. has been [dogged for years by suspicions](#) that it blames others for crimes it either committed itself or had no real interest in solving because they involved well-connected Russians.

In a sign of the political sensitivity of Ms. Dugina's killing, Russian state television on Monday paid tribute to her as a visionary figure. A talk show on state-run Channel One showed Ms. Dugina visiting occupied Ukraine and referring to the country as a place where the West "is refining its strategy for how to destroy its main enemy: Russia."

"She died because she wasn't afraid to say what long ago should have been shouted about," the host said.

There have been many attempts on the lives of Russian public figures, but they have usually been on Kremlin opponents, not allies, like Ms. Politkovskaya and Mr. Nemtsov. Alexander V. Litvinenko, a former F.S.B. agent living in London who was openly critical of Mr. Putin's government, was fatally poisoned in 2006, and there were failed attempts to use a nerve agent to kill a turncoat former Russian spy, Sergei Skripal, in Britain in 2018, and the opposition leader Aleksei A. Navalny in 2020. Western intelligence agencies blamed all three attacks on Russian security services.

Margarita Simonyan, the editor of the state television network RT, on Monday recalled the poisoning of Mr. Skripal as she echoed the Russian threats against Estonia for allegedly harboring Ms. Dugina's assassin.

She posited on social media that Russia could send "professionals who want to admire the spires in the vicinity of Tallinn," Estonia's capital. After two Russian intelligence operatives were identified as suspects in Mr. Skripal's poisoning, they [told Ms. Simonyan](#) in a televised interview that they had been mere tourists visiting Salisbury, England, to admire its cathedral spire.

Tensions have been running high between Russia and the Baltic states, which broke away from the Soviet Union three decades ago and have been particularly fearful of the regional hegemony Mr. Putin wants to re-establish for Moscow. They joined NATO and the European Union in 2004, and this year the Baltics, particularly Estonia, [have been among Europe's leading critics of the Kremlin](#).

Estonia said it had received no official request for information or cooperation from Moscow in connection with the attack. Its police service declined to comment on whether the suspect had entered the country, issuing a statement that said: "We can share information about the individuals entering or leaving Estonia only in cases prescribed by law — Russian F.S.B.'s accusations, which reached us through the media, is not one of them."

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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 US: civilians in heightened threat by Russia</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/22/world/ukraine-russia-war-news#us-russia-strikes-ukraine">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/22/world/ukraine-russia-war-news#us-russia-strikes-ukraine</a>
GIST	<p>American intelligence agencies believe Russia is likely to step up its efforts to attack civilian infrastructure and government buildings in Ukraine with the war about to begin its seventh month and Ukraine about to celebrate its Independence Day holiday, the State Department and other U.S. officials said Monday.</p> <p>The U.S. government declassified an intelligence warning on Monday to ensure that the officials' concerns about the threat reached a broad audience. Following that declassification, the U.S. Embassy in <a href="#">Kyiv issued a security alert</a> and once more urged American citizens to leave Ukraine.</p> <p>"The Department of State has information that Russia is stepping up efforts to launch strikes against Ukraine's civilian infrastructure and government facilities in the coming days," the alert said. "Russian strikes in Ukraine pose a continued threat to civilians and civilian infrastructure."</p> <p>The warning comes as both Ukrainian and American officials have been concerned about a new Russian offensive, potentially timed to Ukraine's Independence Day on Wednesday and as a response to a string of attacks against Russian military targets in Crimea, the peninsula in the Black Sea that Russia illegally annexed in 2014. The declassified intelligence warning <a href="#">was reported earlier by Reuters</a>.</p> <p>Across Ukraine, security is being tightened. Officers are fanning out on the streets. <a href="#">Big celebrations have been banned</a>.</p> <p>People have been urged to pay special attention to air-raid sirens, which many seem to have become inured to. In Kyiv, the capital, the sirens usually produce no rush to bomb shelters. The Ukrainian authorities warn that Russia still possesses an enormous stockpile of cruise missiles, which, in the past six months, have brought sudden death to Ukrainians in many places.</p>



Throughout the war, Russia has struck civilian infrastructure, including rail lines, shopping malls, auditoriums and apartment buildings. Some of those attacks have been part of broad artillery barrages, while others have been targeted strikes that missed their intended marks.

President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine has also been warning his citizens to be extra cautious at this time.

“We should be aware that this week Russia may try to do something particularly nasty, something particularly cruel,” Mr. Zelensky [said in his nightly address](#) on Saturday.

And there is another worry: that Russia may use the milestone to start [show trials](#). Videos have emerged of iron cages being built on the stage of the philharmonic theater in Mariupol, a battered city that the Russians occupy. The fear is that, on Wednesday, as Ukraine celebrates its decades of self-rule, the Russians will take Ukrainian prisoners of war into the theater and put them on trial as terrorists.

“Our enemy is insidious,” said [a statement from the Ukrainian National Police](#). “It can deliver painful blows precisely on the days of the most important national holiday — the Independence Day of Ukraine.”

Mick Mulroy, a former C.I.A. officer and Pentagon official, said he expected Russia to aim for targets in Kyiv, potentially using the killing of [Daria Dugina](#) in a car-bombing outside Moscow on Saturday to justify the strikes. Ms. Dugina, 29, was the daughter of Aleksandr Dugin, a political theorist who has provided the intellectual framework for President Vladimir V. Putin’s invasion of Ukraine.

The mood in Kyiv on Monday appeared somber. The city has rebounded since Russian forces withdrew from its outskirts a little more than a month into the war. The streets are full of people now, mingling with friends, going to work, taking a stroll in the summer sunshine. But with war still raging in the country’s south and the east, the sense of normalcy is fragile. Many residents seemed happy with the idea of getting through Wednesday quietly.

Pavlo Shetemet, a government clerk, said he planned to work from home on Independence Day and might even head to the beach, as he did on Monday, which was bright and warm. He chatted with friends and watched children splashing around an emerald-green lagoon off the Dnipro River, not far from the center of town.

“A lot of people are talking about possible attacks,” said Mr. Shetemet. “Me, personally? I don’t think the Russians will do that on Independence Day. It’s too obvious. It’s too stupid.”

He stared out at the lagoon’s gentle waves. “It will be OK, I think,” he said. “But it won’t be normal.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Russia blames Ukraine woman in bombing</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/22/world/ukraine-russia-war-news#russia-daria-dugina-ukraine-estonia">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/22/world/ukraine-russia-war-news#russia-daria-dugina-ukraine-estonia</a>
GIST	<p>The Russian authorities on Monday blamed Ukraine for organizing the <a href="#">killing of Daria Dugina</a>, the ultranationalist daughter of a prominent Russian supporter of the invasion, a claim that raised fears of a further escalation in the six-month war.</p> <p>Ukraine has denied having anything to do with the car bombing on Saturday that killed Ms. Dugina, 29, on a highway in an affluent district outside of Moscow.</p> <p>Russia’s domestic intelligence agency, the F.S.B., issued a statement on Monday saying that the attack “was prepared and committed by the Ukrainian intelligence agencies.” The claim could not be independently verified.</p>

Some Russian media reports had said that Ms. Dugina's father, [Aleksandr Dugin](#), an ultranationalist writer who helped build the ideological foundation for President Vladimir V. Putin's invasion of Ukraine, was the likely target of the blast.

But the F.S.B.'s statement described Ms. Dugina — herself [a hawkish commentator who had earned a following with frequent appearances on state media](#) — as the intended target.

Soon after the F.S.B.'s announcement, the Kremlin published a [letter](#) of sympathy from Mr. Putin to Ms. Dugina's parents, the Russian leader's first statement about the attack. "A vile, cruel crime ended the life of Daria Dugina — a bright, talented person with a real Russian heart," Mr. Putin wrote, making no mention of the perpetrators or of Ukraine. "She proved in her actions what it means to be a patriot of Russia."

In its statement, the F.S.B. alleged that a Ukrainian woman had been contracted to carry out the bombing, saying that she had entered Russia on July 23 and rented an apartment in the Moscow building where Ms. Dugina lived "in order to organize the murder of Dugina and obtain information about her lifestyle." The woman was at the same nationalist festival attended by Ms. Dugina and her father on Saturday before the bombing, the agency said.

Ukraine's presidential adviser, Mykhailo Podolyak, [tweeted that](#) the F.S.B. statement was "propaganda" from a "fictional world."

The F.S.B. also alleged that the perpetrator of the bombing had left Russia for Estonia, later releasing video footage of what it said showed her in a gray Mini Cooper crossing the border. The Estonian Foreign Ministry said it had no immediate comment. But the F.S.B.'s claim was likely to further inflame tensions with the Baltic nation, [which has been among Europe's leading critics of the Kremlin](#).

A senior Russian lawmaker, Vladimir Dzhavarov, said on Monday that if Estonia did not hand over the woman, there would be "every reason for the Russian Federation to take tough actions against the Estonian state."

The car bombing came on the heels of a spate of Ukrainian attacks [deep behind the front line in Crimea](#), and the F.S.B.'s accusations heightened the clamor among the war's most ardent cheerleaders to escalate the fighting and punish President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine.

"The Zelensky regime must be destroyed," Sergei Mironov, a hawkish leader in the Russian parliament, said in a state television interview. "What the Ukrainian intelligence agencies are doing today on the orders of Zelensky is terrorism in its truest form."

But the F.S.B. statement may be unlikely to convince critics of Mr. Putin that Ukraine was indeed behind the crime. Coming just over 36 hours after the blast, the agency's declaration that it had "solved" the crime represented an extraordinarily rapid investigation compared to [other high-profile assassinations](#) — like those of the opposition leader [Boris Nemtsov](#) in 2015 or of the independent journalist [Anna Politkovskaya](#) in 2006, cases that remain unsolved.

And the agency has been accused of staging attacks for political ends. Two decades ago, the F.S.B. was [accused of involvement](#) in bombings of apartment buildings in Moscow that killed more than 300 people and touched off Russia's invasion of the republic of Chechnya. Those accusations were never confirmed. At the time, residents in Ryazan, 115 miles from Moscow, said they had found intelligence agents planting explosives underneath an apartment building, [prompting the F.S.B. to apologize](#) and assert that the material in question was sugar sacks and that the incident was a security exercise.

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HEADLINE	08/22 FSB long dogged suspicions of coverups
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/22/world/ukraine-russia-war-news#russia-fsb-crime">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/22/world/ukraine-russia-war-news#russia-fsb-crime</a>

GIST	<p>Three days before Russia invaded Ukraine in late February, Moscow's domestic intelligence agency accused Ukraine of shelling a house used by Russian border guards and released a short video showing a destroyed building dangling a Russian flag.</p> <p>The claim by <a href="#">the Federal Security Service, or F.S.B., of a Ukrainian attack</a>, was quickly dismissed as a hoax. There was no crater in or around the building in the video, which looked more like an abandoned hut than a border guard shelter. The nearest Ukrainian military outpost was 25 miles away.</p> <p>The episode recalled a series of events in 1939, when the Soviet Union shelled a village on its border with Finland. The Soviets blame Finland for the attack as a pretext to invade. That case helps explain why, on Monday, skepticism greeted claims by the F.S.B. that it had identified a Ukrainian woman as the culprit in a fatal car bombing near Moscow over the weekend.</p> <p>The F.S.B. had seemingly solved <a href="#">the murder of Daria Dugina</a>, the daughter of a notorious ultranationalist ideologue, with uncharacteristic speed. But the agency is less a serious law enforcement agency than a political tool. And like its Soviet-era predecessor, the K.G.B., the F.S.B. has been dogged for years by suspicions that it blames others for crimes it either committed itself, or had no real interest in solving because they involved well-connected Russians it dared not touch.</p> <p>Russia's president, Vladimir V. Putin, presided over one of the murkiest and most notorious examples of this while serving a prime minister in 1999, when he blamed Chechen militants for a series of apartment bombings in Moscow that killed more than 300 people.</p> <p>Those allegations were seriously undermined when residents in an apartment block in Ryazan, a town southeast of Moscow, found sacks of what looked like explosives in their building. It turned out that the sacks had been planted there by the F.S.B., which <a href="#">apologized</a> and claimed that they had been put there as part of an antiterror drill and contained only sugar.</p> <p>More than two decades later, the affair is still shrouded in mystery, though one thing is clear: The apartment bombings opened the way for a new Russian military onslaught against Chechnya and for the ascension of Mr. Putin — until then a little-known former K.G.B. spy — to the Russian presidency just a few months later.</p> <p>Chechens were also blamed by the F.S.B. for the 2015 murder of Boris Y. Nemtsov, a prominent opposition politician. Many believe his killing, on a bridge next to the Kremlin, was ordered by the Kremlin or its loyal security services.</p> <p>Another prominent Kremlin critic, Anna S. Politkovskaya, was assassinated in 2006. Several men were convicted in connection with her killing, but they did not include the person widely suspected of having orchestrated it: an F.S.B. colonel.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 UN team to probe killing of prisoners</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/22/world/ukraine-russia-war-news#a-un-team-is-ready-to-investigate-an-explosion-that-killed-dozens-of-ukrainian-prisoners-but-awaits-security-guarantees">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/22/world/ukraine-russia-war-news#a-un-team-is-ready-to-investigate-an-explosion-that-killed-dozens-of-ukrainian-prisoners-but-awaits-security-guarantees</a>
GIST	<p>An international team is in place to investigate the killing of prisoners in a deadly <a href="#">explosion</a> at a prison camp in separatist-controlled eastern Ukraine, but the fact-finding mission can't begin until Russia and Ukraine can assure its safety, a United Nations spokesman said.</p> <p>António Guterres, the U.N. secretary general, on Monday appointed the final two members to the team that will be led by a Brazilian general.</p> <p>Russia and Ukraine had both requested an <a href="#">investigation</a>, with each side accusing the other of carrying out the July 29 attack on a prison in Olenivka, Donetsk, that killed 53 Ukrainian prisoners of war and injured 75.</p>

Mr. Guterres announced the fact-finding mission in early August. On a trip to Ukraine last week, he said it would be led by Gen. Carlos dos Santos Cruz of Brazil, who has overseen a high-level review of violence against U.N. peacekeepers.

The U.N. said the two other members of the three-person team are Ingibjorg Solrun Gisladdottir, a former foreign minister of Iceland, and Issoufou Yacouba, a former inspector general and regional governor of Niger.

The team is expected to present a report on its findings to Mr. Guterres.

The time frame for when its work begins depends on Russia and Ukraine providing security assurance for the team, Stephane Dujarric, the secretary general's spokesman, told reporters on Monday. The U.N. has informed both countries about the mission, added Mr. Dujarric.

"We need the assurances, not only for their safety, but free access to people, places and papers for them to do their work free of any interference by any of the parties. Once that happens, obviously, they will do their utmost to complete the report as soon as possible," said Mr. Dujarric.

Olenivka, the site of the killing, is controlled by separatists aligned with Russia. Moscow has accused Ukraine's military of targeting the prison with rockets provided by the U.S. Ukraine has denied the allegation and blamed Russia and a mercenary group for placing mines in the barracks and blowing it up from inside.

As the war enters its seventh month, it continues to take a devastating toll on civilians. The U.N. agency for children, UNICEF, said in a [statement](#) that at least 972 children have been killed or injured since the war started on Feb. 24, an average of over five children killed or injured each day, but the real number is likely much higher.

The U.N. Security Council will hold two back-to-back meetings on Ukraine this week. The council will hold an emergency meeting on Tuesday afternoon at the request of Russia to discuss the security threats at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant. On Wednesday, the council will hold a meeting, requested by U.S. and European members, to recognize a full six months of war, and Mr. Guterres is expected to brief the council on his recent trip to Ukraine.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Fraught history political murders in Russia</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/22/world/ukraine-russia-war-news#the-death-of-a-putin-ally-opens-a-new-chapter-in-the-fraught-history-of-political-assassinations-in-russia">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/22/world/ukraine-russia-war-news#the-death-of-a-putin-ally-opens-a-new-chapter-in-the-fraught-history-of-political-assassinations-in-russia</a>
GIST	<p>High-profile assassination attempts helped define Russia's chaotic 1990s. In recent years, they have targeted businessmen and journalists in Ukraine — and, in the past few weeks, <a href="#">pro-Russian figures in Russian-occupied parts of Ukraine</a>.</p> <p>But the <a href="#">killing of the Russian nationalist commentator Daria Dugina</a> this weekend when the vehicle she was driving exploded outside Moscow was something different. Car bombs were a fixture of 1990s Moscow, but they have become a rarity in President Vladimir V. Putin's much more tightly controlled Russia.</p> <p>And while Russia has seen its share of high-profile assassination attempts in recent years, the targets have tended to be the Kremlin's opponents rather than its supporters.</p> <p>Although Ukraine has been able to <a href="#">target people in Russian-occupied areas near the front line</a>, there has been no indication that it could conduct an audacious attack so close to the Russian capital.</p>

The killing of Ms. Dugina was particularly brazen because it occurred close to the glittering suburb known as Rublyovka, home to sprawling villas of Russia's ruling class.

"Rublyovka is shivering," a pro-Kremlin political analyst, Sergei Markov, wrote on the Telegram social network. "This act of terror is a message for them: Be afraid, you could be next."

Much remains unknown about the blast that took the life of Ms. Dugina on Saturday night. Russian state television described the explosion as being so powerful that it shattered the windows of nearby homes.

Associates of Ms. Dugina's and pro-Kremlin commentators on Sunday blamed Ukraine — accusations that Kyiv rejected — while some Russian critics of the Kremlin posited the attack could have been engineered by proponents of the war to push Mr. Putin to escalate the conflict.

Yulia Latynina, a Russian journalist and Putin critic, suggested that Ms. Dugina's killing could be a false flag operation intended to justify a campaign of repressions inside the country or to temper the increasingly vocal pro-war party that has been turning critical of the Kremlin.

"This murder can be followed by total terror," she said in [a video](#) on YouTube.

Whatever the case, the attack opened a consequential new chapter in the fraught history of assassinations in both Russia and Ukraine. Until this weekend, the most high-profile assassination attempt to have taken place in Russia in recent years was [the poisoning](#) of the opposition leader Aleksei A. Navalny in 2020.

In that case, [the use of a Soviet-era military-grade nerve agent](#) pointed to the Russian government, which denied involvement, as a suspect. And in other cases, too, opponents of Mr. Putin or his close allies have been targeted — from [the murder of the opposition politician Boris Nemtsov](#) just outside the Kremlin in 2015 to [the shootings of the journalist Anna Politkovskaya](#) in Moscow in 2006 and the former Chechen separatist commander [Zelimkhan Khangoshvili in a Berlin park in 2019](#).

Prominent supporters of Mr. Putin, on the other hand, have rarely been targeted. In Kyiv, the prominent Ukrainian journalist Oles Buzina, who had a vocal pro-Russian stance and advocated closer ties between Ukraine and Russia, [was killed in 2015 in an assassination](#) that was never resolved.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Social media, adolescents' mental health</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/22/health/adolescents-mental-health-technology.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/22/health/adolescents-mental-health-technology.html</a>
GIST	<p>Puberty hit C early — in the fourth grade — and hard: acne, breasts, attention, humiliation. C found refuge in the internet.</p> <p>Every night, often well past midnight, C lay in bed with an iPod Touch they received from their grandparents as a 10th birthday gift. (C, who is being identified by their first initial for privacy reasons, is gender nonbinary and takes the pronoun "they.") On the new device, C made friends on social media and uploaded selfies. Viewers posted compliments on a photo of C standing in an orchard, holding an apple and "looking like a full adult," C said.</p> <p>Less welcome were the comments from men who sent pictures of their genitals and asked C for nude images and for sex. "I had no idea what was happening," C, who is now 22 and lives in Salt Lake City, said. "What do you do when someone's just, like, sending you gross stuff in your inbox? Nothing. Just ignore it."</p> <p>That plan did not work out. The internet seeped into C's psyche; severely depressed, they found kinship online with other struggling adolescents and learned ways to self-harm.</p> <p>"I don't want to blame the internet, but I do want to blame the internet," C said. "I feel like if I was born in 2000 B.C. in the Alps, I'd still be depressive, but I think it's wildly exacerbated by the climate we live in."</p>

A yearlong series of articles by The Times has explored how the major risks to adolescents have shifted sharply in recent decades, from drinking, drugs and teen pregnancy to anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicide. The decline in adolescent mental health was underway before the pandemic; now it is a full-blown crisis, affecting young people across economic, racial and gender lines.

The trend has coincided with teenagers spending a growing amount of time online, and social media is commonly blamed for the crisis. In a widely covered study in 2021 first reported by The Wall Street Journal, Meta (formerly Facebook) found that 40 percent of girls on Instagram, which Meta owns, reported feeling unattractive because of social comparisons they experienced using the platform.

The reality is more complex. What science increasingly shows is that virtual interactions can have a powerful impact, positive or negative, depending on a person's underlying emotional state.

"The internet is a volume knob, an amplifier and accelerant," Byron Reeves, a professor of communication at Stanford University, said.

But there is a lack of reliable research into how technology affects the brain, and a shortage of funding to help ailing teens cope. From 2005 to 2015, funding from the National Institute of Mental Health to study innovative ways to understand and help adolescents with mental health issues [fell 42 percent](#).

"The federal funding, or lack thereof, has contributed enormously to the place we're at," said Kimberly Hoagwood, a child and adolescent psychiatrist at NYU Langone Health and former associate director for child and adolescent mental health research at the N.I.M.H. "We've sort of put our blinders on."

Dr. Joshua Gordon, the current director of the institute, said, "We don't have tremendous insights into why it's happening."

But there are powerful clues, experts said. They widely posit that heavy technology use is interacting with a key biological factor: the onset of puberty, which is happening earlier than ever. Puberty makes adolescents highly sensitive to social information — whether they are liked, whether they have friends, where they fit in. Adults face the same onslaught, but pubescent teens encounter it before other parts of the brain have fully developed to handle it.

"On a content level, and on a process level, it makes your head explode," said Stephen Hinshaw, a psychologist at the University of California, Berkeley. "You want to make it stop — cutting yourself, burning, mutilation and suicide attempts."

The ability of youth to cope has been further eroded by declines in sleep, exercise and in-person connection, which all have fallen as screen time has gone up. Young people, despite vast virtual connections, or maybe because of them, report being lonelier than any other generation. And many studies have found that [adolescents who spend more time online are less happy](#).

Still, many questions remain. This is partly because the internet experience is so vast and varied, health experts say, which makes it hard to generalize about how screen time — and how much of it — leads to anxiety and depression.

"That doesn't mean there's not a relationship," Dr. Reeves said. "There are so many effects that are totally idiosyncratic to individual kids." He added, "Each of their experiences are so radically different."

### **An outside connection**

C grew up in an upper-middle-class family and displayed a gift for music from an early age. An uncle remembered C at 8 playing a flawless "Für Elise" on piano, with a bubbly Shirley Temple vibe. "An incredible talent, we were thinking Juilliard," he said.



Mental health challenges ran in C's family. In third grade, C began obsessively digging a pencil into one leg. Shortly after, puberty hit — "crazy early," C recalled. "I was still in elementary school and suddenly my brain is, you know, working like 20 times faster on the dark stuff."

At 10, C joined Mini Nation, a virtual community where they hoped to find friendship but instead faced harassment from men. C didn't tell their parents, fearing they would take away the iPod. "It was my connection to the outside world," C said.

The cutting intensified. "Self-harm was like a smoke break," C said. "I would do it, watch a little YouTube, take a break, knife, come back."

After classmates told a school counselor about the wounds on C's arms, C spent a week in a psychiatric hospital, was prescribed Zoloft, and was sent home.

C's family moved to Utah, hoping for a fresh start. But the challenges plaguing C could be found everywhere. From 2007 to 2016, [emergency room visits for people aged 5 to 17 rose 117 percent](#) for anxiety disorders, 44 percent for mood disorders and 40 percent for attention disorders, while overall pediatric visits were stable. The same study, published in *Pediatrics* in 2020, found that visits for deliberate self-harm rose 329 percent. But visits for alcohol-related problems dropped 39 percent, reflecting the change in the kind of public health risks posed to teenagers.

In the same period, the use of personal electronic devices exploded. In 2005, [45 percent of teens had phones; by 2010, 75 percent did](#), and [by 2018, 95 percent did — nearly half of whom reported being online "almost constantly."](#) Online time rose further during the pandemic.

Dr. Karen Manotas, a child and adolescent psychiatrist at the University of Utah, said that social media sometimes seemed to play a role in the adolescent mental health cases she handled. Last September, Dr. Manotas treated a 15-year-old boy in the hospital who had attempted suicide after learning of his girlfriend's infidelity. When he decided to forgive her, the boy's friends turned on him with "an online group text chat about him being a sucker."

Around that time, Dr. Manotas was seeing a 15-year-old girl predisposed to anxiety and depression who had developed a tic disorder, yelling out noises in public and turning her neck obsessively. The girl, Dr. Manotas learned, had identified closely with "Tik Tok influencers" whose tic disorders the girl seemed to adopt to perfection. "It was the exact neck tic this girl presented with," Dr. Manotas said. "I was floored."

Dr. Manotas noted that the girl's tics were expressed in some circumstances but not others, and she ultimately concluded that the girl had been influenced by social contagion. (The girl subsequently sought care in an inpatient setting, and Dr. Manotas did not know how her condition resolved.)

"It's like this sense of belonging and community that doesn't really exist but they believe that it does," Dr. Manotas said. "A lot of kids and teens are resorting to these online communities as a way to find belonging and who they are."

#### **'A double whammy'**

Since 1900, the average age of the onset of puberty for girls has fallen to 12 from 14, a shift that health experts attribute in part to improvements in nutrition. (Puberty occurs about a year later for boys than for girls, and its onset has fallen, too.) In puberty, the brain is flooded with hormones and other neurochemicals that, among other things, render a young adolescent [more sensitive to changes in social cues](#), according to brain-imaging research by Andrew Meltzoff, co-director of the University of Washington Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences.

But the regions of the brain responsible for self-regulation do not develop any faster or earlier than before. Psychosocial maturity — a person's ability to exercise self-restraint in emotional situations — does not fully mature until the 20s, according to [a 2019](#) paper published by the American Psychological Association that drew on research involving 5,000 teens from 11 countries.

Now, the combination of early puberty and information overload presents “a double whammy” that can lead to “anxiety and depression when people feel a lack of control,” Dr. Meltzoff said.

Researchers have been framing the issue around a particular set of questions: Is social media to blame for the rise in adolescent emotional distress? Is this a problem associated with consuming one type of information?

The results of numerous studies [are conflicting](#), with some finding that heavy use of social media is associated with depressive symptoms and others finding little or no connection.

A 2018 study of lesbian, gay and bisexual teens [found that social media was a double-edged sword](#), opening up new support networks but also exposing adolescents to animosity. “There are literally thousands of hate messages in an instant,” said Gary Harper, a professor of behavioral health at the University of Michigan.

At the same time, he said, social media also provides validation and community: “It’s good to have a variety of ways we can be, that affirms diverse identities.” He added, “But your brain needs to develop enough to sort through all that information.”

A [2019 study in the Netherlands reached a similarly equivocal conclusion](#). Over three weeks, the researchers asked 353 adolescents to report six times a day how often they had browsed Instagram and Snapchat in the past hour and to note how they had felt in that time and at the moment of reporting. Twenty percent of teens who used their phones to access social media said they felt worse — but 17 percent reported that their mood had improved.

The most reliable conclusion, researchers say, is that some teens are more vulnerable than others.

“Children can react very differently,” said Patti Valkenburg, founder and director of Center for Research on Children, Adolescents and the Media at the University of Amsterdam, and co-author of the Dutch study. For instance, when they encounter people online who appear successful, “some can be envious and others can be inspired,” Dr. Valkenburg said.

### **Sleep and other factors**

Absent clear answers, some researchers have begun to reframe the core question: not how much screen time is too much, but which activities known to be healthful [might screen time be displacing](#)?

These activities include sleep, time spent with family and friends, and time spent outdoors and being physical. Sleep looms particularly large. [In 2020, a multiyear study involving nearly 4,800 teens](#) found a close relationship between poor sleep and mental health issues. Participants with a diagnosis of depression got less than seven and a half hours of sleep per night, compared with the eight to 10 hours recommended by the National Sleep Foundation for people 14 to 17.

Poor sleep is a “fork in the road, where a teen’s mental health can deteriorate if not treated,” Michael Gradisar, a clinical child psychologist at Flinders University in Australia, said in a news release accompanying the study.

A shortage of sleep makes it even harder for the brain to regulate and process emotional challenges, [multiple studies have found](#). Many experts recommend that parents enforce a no-device policy for an hour before bedtime and that they redirect young people to in-person, outdoor activities during the day.

Dr. Kara Bagot, a child and adolescent psychiatrist at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, noted that ample research showed the benefits of rest, exercise, imaginative and in-person play, whereas the impact of heavy screen time was uncertain. “We don’t know what can happen, and childhood is such an important developmental period for brain development, for social development,” Dr. Bagot said.

That uncertainty, she added, results in part from the “huge mismatch” between the billions of dollars spent by tech companies to attract users and the modest funding available to researchers like her to study the impact. “It’s only going to get worse,” she said. “The tech keeps getting better and more advanced over time, and more engaging.”

Major research efforts, such as the federally funded Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development study, are still in their early stages. The study follows 12,000 youth in the United States and includes questionnaires, behavioral studies and expansive neuroimaging to understand brain development and function. The study began in 2015 with an emphasis on substance abuse but has grown to trying to understand the impact of screen time.

Dr. Gordon, director of the National Institute of Mental Health, said the government wanted more research but was not receiving enough funding applications from scientists.

“There’s not enough psychiatric care, not enough social workers to treat kids,” he said. “Even worse than that is the shortage of child mental health researchers. It’s a real problem.”

Two decades ago, public service campaigns encouraged adolescents to “just say no” to drugs, to practice safe sex and to find a designated driver. Today’s health experts are having a harder time offering adolescents like C reliable, hard-and-fast guidelines for handling screen time and social media, said Dr. Hoagwood, the former associate director at the N.I.M.H.: “We can’t just tell her she shouldn’t have spent so much time on social media and then she’d be OK.”

### **A stage of their own**

In July, C stood at the edge of a music stage in Denver, rings in each nostril and dark makeup expertly drawn to resemble a cat’s eyes.

“I love that face!” a friend wrote on C’s Facebook page. “Best eyes ev.” C hearted the comment.

After years of pain and self-discovery, C’s relationship to the internet underwent a dramatic shift. There was an eating disorder, more cutting, the pressure of school, the agonizing pain of depression.

At 15, C was hospitalized for a week, and at 18 for longer, after C took “a bunch of pills, everything I could find.”

“How would you believe it’s going to get better when you’re growing into your adult brain but still treated like a child?” C said. “And you have depression. It’s like, Wow, this is it, this is what’s waiting for me — cool, I’m out, I want to die.”

During their second hospitalization, C met with a psychiatrist and discussed the online abuse from years earlier. “It was the first time I admitted out loud that all the time I spent online since I was 10 was maybe counterproductive to my health,” C said.

During the pandemic, C adopted the pronoun “they.” The change reflected their understanding that they have “power over how people perceive me and how I perceive myself,” C said. “Instead of accepting the role that was put on me, I’ve made my own.”

This spring C completed an undergraduate degree in speech and hearing science. They are also a singer, songwriter and keyboardist with a rock band, Lane & the Chain, which has a growing following. In Denver, C played with a band called Sunfish.

“Now that I’m alive, I want to be alive and pursue music,” C said. That includes being comfortable appearing in online music videos and other social media: “I’m more complex than just being a little girl on the internet who’s, you know, just for looking at.”

	C added: “In my adult nonbinary body, I don’t mind people looking at me, because I feel like I’m in control now.”
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Downtown Seattle recovery in rough shape</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/data/the-state-of-downtown-how-does-seattle-compare-with-other-big-cities/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/data/the-state-of-downtown-how-does-seattle-compare-with-other-big-cities/</a>
GIST	<p>There’s no getting around it — downtown Seattle is in rough shape.</p> <p>But Seattle is hardly the only city facing these challenges. And according to a <a href="#">new study</a> that looks at how the pandemic has affected the downtowns of 62 U.S. and Canadian cities, things here could be worse — just look at Portland and San Francisco.</p> <p>This new study, which comes from the Urban Displacement Project, a research initiative at the University of California Berkeley and the University of Toronto, takes a novel approach. Most research attempting to measure the vitality of urban centers since the start of the pandemic has looked at factors like the change in office vacancy rates, public transportation ridership, or retail spending. Instead, this new study looked at smartphone data.</p> <p>Researchers analyzed data from 18 million smartphone visits to downtown points of interest, comparing current levels of activity (the most recent data covers March through May of this year) with the pre-pandemic period (2019). Points of interest include many places someone might visit — restaurants, retail shops, grocery stores and so on.</p> <p>As of this spring, smartphone activity in downtown Seattle was at 52% of its 2019 levels. That’s a huge decline, to be sure, but it’s far from the worst. Among the 62 cities in the study, Seattle ranked 40th in terms of recovery.</p> <p>Remote work has largely emptied downtown streets of workers, while concerns around visible homelessness and crime have been on the rise. And downtown’s brick-and-mortar retail is increasingly losing out to online shopping. The neighborhood just took another blow when the <a href="#">Amazon Go store on Fourth Avenue closed</a> due to safety concerns.</p> <p>But here’s a positive sign: This spring was the first time since the pandemic began that downtown Seattle’s smartphone activity passed 50% of 2019 levels. The study shows the lowest point was in summer of 2020, when downtown activity was at just 37%.</p> <p>I’ve been doing my part to help downtown Seattle’s numbers. Since it opened in January, I’ve done my grocery shopping at the <a href="#">new PCC</a> on Fourth Avenue — and this is purely anecdotal, but I have noticed the store has been more crowded recently.</p> <p>Among the 62 cities in the study, San Francisco came in dead last, with smartphone visits to downtown points of interest at just 31% of pre-pandemic levels. Portland’s downtown was third from the bottom, at 41%. (Cleveland ranked as the second least-recovered downtown, at 36%.)</p> <p>In four of the 62 downtowns, smartphone activity was actually higher this spring than it was before the pandemic. Salt Lake City was No. 1, at 155% of pre-pandemic levels. The other three downtowns exceeding their 2019 performance were Bakersfield, California; Columbus, Ohio; and Fresno, California.</p> <p>The study showed Southern cities were the first to bounce back, but now we’re seeing recovery in most cities across the country. Also, downtowns located in mid-sized metro areas have tended to recover better than downtowns in major metro areas, like Seattle.</p>

Even so, some larger cities have recovered quite well, and significantly better than Seattle. For example, smartphone activity in Baltimore was at 91% of pre-pandemic levels, while San Diego reached 89% and New York hit 78%.

The study examined the role that 43 employment and socioeconomic variables have played in downtown recoveries.

A couple factors stood out in terms of their effect on downtown recovery, says Karen Chapple, director of the Urban Displacement Project. Commuting was one of them, with shorter average commutes and higher levels of commuting by car leading to better recoveries.

“More single-family homes and lower employment densities downtown help as well,” she said.

The study found the rise of remote work is one of the main stumbling blocks to downtown recovery. That makes sense. Without all those workers in the office to bolster the downtown daytime population, recovery will suffer.

The study also found that downtowns with more diverse economies have bounced back more quickly.

Seattle, Portland and San Francisco all have high concentrations of employment sectors that support remote work, such as tech and other professional fields.

San Francisco, in particular, is lagging so badly precisely because it’s downtown employment is overspecialized in professional, scientific, and technical services. For example, just 2% of downtown jobs in San Francisco are in health care and social assistance, compared with 14% in Seattle. And arts, entertainment and recreation jobs in downtown San Francisco are at half of Seattle’s levels.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Seattle: not enough school bus drivers</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/seattle/not-enough-bus-drivers-seattle-public-schools/281-43ec9b7e-a55a-44a2-a719-2d416ae5159b">https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/seattle/not-enough-bus-drivers-seattle-public-schools/281-43ec9b7e-a55a-44a2-a719-2d416ae5159b</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — Seattle Public Schools' transportation contractors don't have enough drivers to offer all of the bus routes at the beginning of the school year, according to a <a href="#">message</a> the district sent to parents on Monday.</p> <p>That means some parents will have to find another way to get their kids to school for a period of time. The district said parents will receive notification if their child's route isn't in service before the start of the school year.</p> <p>Classes begin for grades 1-12 on Sept. 7 and for kindergarten and preschool students on Sept. 12. SPS and other school districts nationwide have been experiencing challenges finding enough bus drivers.</p> <p>SPS warned parents last year that transportation challenges were likely to continue after the district <a href="#">abandoned a proposal</a> to switch to a three-tier bell schedule. The plan was intended to stagger school start times between 7:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. to allow fewer bus drivers to drive more routes. However, the school board declined to move forward with the proposal after hearing concerns from parents.</p> <p>SPS is contracting with two transportation vendors for the 2022-2023 school year: First Student and Zum. Between the two companies, the district still doesn't have enough drivers to staff all of the bus routes. The providers are undergoing "robust recruiting efforts" and the district plans to offer more routes as the companies hire more staff.</p>

	<p>"We are committed to making sure that all students who need it have safe and dependable transportation to and from school. We hope that the driver shortages will be resolved quickly so we can resume all bus service," the message to parents said.</p> <p>The district suggested additional transportation options for families who will not have bus service at the start of the school year.</p> <p>Beginning on Sept. 1, riders 18 and younger can ride King County Metro, Sound Transit's Link light rail system and many other regional transit services for free. Visit the <a href="#">Free Youth Transit Pass website</a> for more information.</p> <p>The district also has resources on walking, biking and rolling to school on its <a href="#">website</a>.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>08/22 Northwest blood supply critical levels</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/northwest-blood-supply-critical-levels/QFEY47ZACFFBPGRXIBLMFY7PTQ/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/northwest-blood-supply-critical-levels/QFEY47ZACFFBPGRXIBLMFY7PTQ/</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>Due to increased hospital needs, the regional supply of blood and platelets has dipped to critical levels, according to Bloodworks Northwest.</p> <p>As donations remain low this summer, Bloodworks Northwest says over 9,000 appointments need to be filled between now and Labor Day to meet expected demand.</p> <p>The most in-demand blood type, Type O, is especially needed to support trauma patients and all eligible donors with Type O are urged to donate immediately.</p> <p>Most people who are at least 18 years old and weigh at least 110 pounds can donate blood every 56 days.</p> <p>In Washington, 16- or 17-year-olds must have a signed permission form.</p> <p>Schedule an appointment to donate blood now at <a href="http://bloodworksnw.org">bloodworksnw.org</a> or call 1-800-398-7888.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>08/22 Kent teachers' union authorizes a strike</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/back-to-school/kent-teachers-union-votes-to-authorize-a-strike-putting-educators-on-the-picket-line">https://komonews.com/news/back-to-school/kent-teachers-union-votes-to-authorize-a-strike-putting-educators-on-the-picket-line</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>KENT, Wash. — Union teachers who work for the Kent School District voted Monday to authorize a strike, setting up a scenario that could put classroom educators on the picket line for the district's upcoming first day of school, the group said in a written statement.</p> <p>The decision by Kent Education Association members to stage the job action followed a decision by the union in which members approved a vote of no confidence in the Kent School Board and Superintendent Israel Vela.</p> <p>"Our district is behind nearby districts, and we're worried (about) Kent's ability to attract and retain the educators our kids need," said union President Tim Martin, who taught fourth grade at Emerald Park Elementary before beginning his term as full-time union president.</p> <p>According to the union statement, its members are seeking a pay increase to keep up with the rising cost of healthcare and other living expenses.</p> <p>Union members said they were "surprised and disappointed that the district has repeatedly floated several anti-union proposals, including language on discrimination."</p>



	<p>"We really hope the district sees reason," said Natalie Bachman, who teaches kindergarten at Horizon Elementary. "I'm eager to start the school year with my students. I hope it doesn't come down to a strike, but we just can't work under the anti-teacher conditions the district is proposing."</p> <p>The group said district leaders balked at the request even though state-budget funding would cover the pay hike.</p> <p>The union voted to authorize a strike date that would begin on Thursday, Aug. 25 if the district and union reps are unable to reach agreement on a new contract by the end of bargaining on Wednesday, Aug. 24, the union statement said.</p> <p>The district's first day of school is scheduled to begin Aug. 25.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Drought conditions improve, fire risk high</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/washington-toughs-out-drought-conditions-but-wildfire-risk-remains-high">https://www.q13fox.com/news/washington-toughs-out-drought-conditions-but-wildfire-risk-remains-high</a>
GIST	<p><b>SEATTLE</b> - Western Washington is in good shape for <a href="#">drought conditions</a> due to an abundance of spring rain, but we are entering into a third La Niña winter—which is a rare event.</p> <p>It may be hard to believe that portions of the Northwest have been under serious drought conditions, with the lakes looking like they normally do this time of year.</p> <p>If we look back to this last spring's seemingly endless spring rains, it helped Washington's drought situation. Currently, no Washington county is in serious condition, with 29.5% considered "abnormally dry" and just 6% listed in "moderate drought."</p> <p>Compare that to the map this time last year—nearly half the state was listed in "exceptional drought."</p> <p>"Last spring, we had a lot of moisture across the region, it actually showed great improvement and got areas out of drought," said Troy Lindquist with National Weather Service, "unfortunately, Oregon and southern Idaho weren't as fortunate we are in a multi-year drought condition."</p> <p>Despite the improved drought situation, we are currently in peak fire season. Things are predicted to improve starting in October. When the rains start to set in, a major factor right now, lighting-packed thunderstorms ignite the dry landscape.</p> <p>"You got to look back to not only this year, but last year, and that's when the drought really had a grip on the area," explained Lindquist, "there could be lingering long term impacts that made fuels and the landscape, that made it receptive for larger wildfires."</p> <p>Going forward, it could see yet again above-average rain and snow for heading into next year.</p> <p>Scientists are saying we are moving into uncharted territory: three La Niña winters in a row, where Pacific Ocean water temperatures at the equator or cooler than normal. In the past, that's meant a lot of snow and cooler temperatures for the Northwest.</p> <p>"That's no guarantee that we are going to have wetter than normal conditions across the Pacific Northwest, no guarantee that its going to be cooler than normal conditions; it's significant in terms [that] it just doesn't happen that much," said Lindquist.</p> <p>The National Weather Service would only go as far as saying the La Niña conditions will extend into December, with no predictions for later into the new year.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 King Co. health officials: E. coli outbreak</b>
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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/health-officials-investigating-e-coli-outbreak-in-king-county">https://www.q13fox.com/news/health-officials-investigating-e-coli-outbreak-in-king-county</a>
GIST	<p><b>KING COUNTY, Wash.</b> - Health officials are investigating an outbreak of E. coli cases, but the source of the foodborne illness is not yet known.</p> <p>According to Public Health - Seattle &amp; King County, seven cases have been reported in individuals from 11 months to 35 years old. Six of the cases have taken place since June 26.</p> <p>All of the ill people are from East African communities, officials said. They are working to trace the source of the outbreak - the majority of the people exposed reported eating multiple types of meat, including goat and ground beef.</p> <p>"Genetic fingerprinting results (whole genome sequencing) indicate that all 7 ill people have the same genetic strain meaning they likely have a common source of infection," officials wrote in a news release.</p> <p>All seven people had similar symptoms including diarrhea, abdominal cramping, nausea and vomiting. The outbreak does not appear to be related to a <a href="#">multistate outbreak</a> impacting at least four states.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Ukraine: 9,000 troops killed in war</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-fires-eac13f4bb47663c9769696029ecc257d">https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-fires-eac13f4bb47663c9769696029ecc257d</a>
GIST	<p>NIKOPOL, Ukraine (AP) — Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has already killed some 9,000 Ukrainian soldiers since it began nearly six months ago, a general said, and the fighting Monday showed no signs that the war is abating.</p> <p>At a veteran’s event, Ukraine’s military chief, Gen. Valerii Zaluzhnyi, said many of Ukraine’s children need to be taken care of because “their father went to the front line and, perhaps, is one of those almost 9,000 heroes who died.”</p> <p>In Nikopol, across the river from Ukraine’s main nuclear power plant, Russian shelling wounded four people Monday, an official said. The city on the Dnieper River has faced relentless pounding since July 12 that has damaged 850 buildings and sent about half its population of 100,000 fleeing.</p> <p>“I feel hate towards Russians,” said 74-year-old Liudmyla Shyshkina, standing on the edge of her destroyed fourth-floor apartment in Nikopol that no longer has walls. She is still injured from the Aug. 10 blast that killed her 81-year-old husband, Anatoliy.</p> <p>“The Second World War didn’t take away my father, but the Russian war did,” noted Pavlo Shyshkin, his son.</p> <p>The U.N. says 5,587 civilians have been killed and 7,890 wounded in the Russian invasion of Ukraine that began on Feb. 24, although the estimate is likely an undercount. The U.N. children’s agency said Monday that at least 972 Ukrainian children have been killed or injured since Russia invaded. UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell said these are U.N.-verified figures but “we believe the number to be much higher.”</p> <p>U.S. President Joe Biden and the leaders of Britain, France and Germany pleaded Sunday for Russia to end military operations so close to the Zaporizhzhya nuclear plant — Europe’s largest — but Nikopol came under fire three times overnight from rockets and mortar shells. Houses, a kindergarten, a bus station and stores were hit, authorities said.</p> <p>There are widespread fears that continued shelling and fighting in the area could lead to a nuclear catastrophe. Russia has asked for an urgent meeting of the U.N. Security Council on Tuesday to discuss the situation — a move “the audacity” of which Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskyy decried in his evening video address.</p>

“The total number of different Russian cruise missiles that Russia used against us is approaching 3,500. It is simply impossible to count the strikes of Russian artillery; there are so many of them, and they are so intense,” Zelensky said Monday.

Western nations had already scheduled a council meeting on Wednesday -- the six-month anniversary of the Russian invasion -- on its impact on Ukraine.

Vladimir Rogov, an official with the Russia-installed administration of the occupied Zaporizhzhia region, claimed that because of shelling from Ukraine, staffing at the nuclear plant had been cut sharply. Ukrainians say Russia is storing weapons at the plant and has blocked off areas to Ukrainian nuclear workers.

Monday’s announcement of the scope of Ukraine’s military dead stands in sharp contrast to Russia’s military, which last gave an update on March 25 when it said 1,351 Russian troops were killed during the first month of fighting. U.S. military officials estimated two weeks ago that Russia has lost between 70,000 to 80,000 soldiers, both killed and wounded in action.

On Monday though, Moscow turned its attention to one specific civilian death.

Russia blamed Ukrainian spy agencies for the weekend car bombing on the outskirts of Moscow that killed the daughter of a far-right Russian nationalist who ardently supports the invasion of Ukraine.

Russia’s Federal Security Service, the main successor to the KGB, said Monday the killing was “prepared and perpetrated by the Ukrainian special services.” It charged that the bombing that killed 29-year-old TV commentator Darya Dugina, whose father, political theorist Alexander Dugin, is often referred to as “Putin’s brain,” was carried out by a Ukrainian citizen who left Russia for Estonia quickly afterward.

Ukrainian officials have vehemently denied any involvement in the car bombing. Estonian officials say Russia has not asked them to look for the alleged bomber or even spoken to them about the bombing.

On the front lines, the Ukraine military said it carried out a strike on a key bridge over the Dnieper River in the Russian-occupied Kherson region. Local Russia-installed officials said the strike killed two people Monday and wounded 16 others.

Photos on social media showed thick plumes of smoke rising over the Antonivskiy Bridge, an important supply route for the Russian military in Kherson.

On the Russian-occupied Crimean Peninsula, anxiety has been spreading following a spate of fires and explosions at Russian facilities over the past two weeks. The Russian-backed governor of Sevastopol, Mikhail Razvozhayev, ordered that signs showing the location of bomb shelters be placed in the city, which had long seemed untouchable.

Razvozhayev said on Telegram the city is well-protected but “it is better to know where the shelters are.”

Sevastopol, the Crimean port that is the home of Russia’s Black Sea Fleet, has seen a series of drone attacks. A drone exploded at the fleet’s headquarters on July 31, and another was shot down over it last week. Authorities said air-defense systems have shot down other drones as well.

On Monday evening, Sevastopol residents reported hearing loud explosions on social media. Razvozhayev said the air-defense system had shot down “an object ... at high altitude.”

“Preliminary (conclusion) is that it is, again, a drone,” he wrote on Telegram.

Russian President Vladimir Putin didn’t directly mention the war during a speech Monday marking National Flag Day but echoed some of the justifications cited for the invasion.

	“We are firm in pursuing in the international arena only those policies that meet the fundamental interests of the motherland,” Putin said. He maintains that Russia sent troops into Ukraine to protect its people against the encroaching West.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Social Security significant COLA 2023?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/business/inflation-may-push-social-security-cola-up-around-10-in-2023/">https://www.seattletimes.com/business/inflation-may-push-social-security-cola-up-around-10-in-2023/</a>
GIST	<p><i>Bankrate.com</i> - With inflation near a 40-year high, Social Security could get a historic boost next year to help seniors keep up. The most recent estimate for a 2023 cost of living adjustment (COLA) is 9.6 percent, says Mary Johnson, Social Security and Medicare policy analyst for senior advocacy group the Senior Citizens League (SCL).</p> <p>July’s Consumer Price Index (CPI) report showed inflation up 8.5 percent over the last 12 months, making it more difficult for people living on fixed incomes, like those from Social Security benefits, to make ends meet.</p> <p>The 2023 COLA will be based on third-quarter data from the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers, or CPI-W. Johnson says the announcement is expected around Oct. 13, after the release of the September CPI report. If inflation “runs hot” or higher than average, Johnson predicts the COLA could run up to 10.1 percent for 2023. Should it run lower than the recent figures, she says 9.3 percent might be more likely.</p> <p>An adjustment of 9.6 percent would increase the average monthly Social Security retirement benefit of \$1,656 by \$158.98, says Johnson.</p> <p>The prior COLA came in at 5.9 percent, and 9.6 percent this year would be enormous in terms of COLA rates in the recent past.</p> <p>The CPI-W is the benchmark upon which monthly Social Security benefits increases are determined, but the Senior Citizens League has long advocated that the index is not representative of the way seniors live.</p> <p>One often-cited gripe with the CPI-W is the weight it gives to things like gasoline – something urban wage and clerical workers might need to commute to work every day more so than retired seniors. The SCL says this figure underestimates the inflation experienced by Social Security recipients, since it does not give enough weight to expenses senior citizens have, such as healthcare or housing.</p> <p>The league calls for the use of R-CPI-E, or the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly, in place of the CPI-W. The R-CPI-E is based specifically on the spending patterns of the elderly. The group estimates that a senior who filed for Social Security with an average level of benefits over thirty years ago would have received about \$14,000 more in retirement, had the R-CPI-E been used to calculate benefits.</p> <p><b>COLA is a double-edged sword for low-income workers</b></p> <p>Those who receive low-income assistance might be affected by higher COLA increases. Higher benefit amounts next year might hurt the eligibility of low-income assistance recipients to obtain that assistance.</p> <p>According to SCL’s new Seniors Priority Survey, 37 percent of participants reported they received low-income assistance in 2021.</p> <p>In 2022, roughly 14 percent of survey participants said their low-income assistance was actually reduced as a result of their increased Social Security benefit, and another 6 percent lost access altogether to at least one other program.</p> <p>Low-income assistance programs require recipients to stay under a certain income level to qualify for benefits. Last year’s COLA increase of 5.9 percent was one of the largest in history and pushed many over the edge of eligibility.</p>

Should the COLA increase even further in 2023, there may be a sizable portion of seniors in the lose-lose situation of being phased out of their low-assistance program thresholds, but still not covering inflation due to soaring prices.

**Bottom line**

A significant COLA for Social Security is expected for 2023 in the face of persistent rising inflation. The increase will certainly be welcome, but seniors will be looking for a number to cover at least the difference between their monthly benefit and rising prices.

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HEADLINE	08/22 Pediatricians concerns: kids back to school
SOURCE	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/coronavirus/kids-heading-back-to-school-with-relaxed-cdc-virus-guidelines-coronavirus-covid19-omicron-ba5-variant-centers-for-disease-control-and-prevention-vaccine-masking-social-distancing-quarantine">https://komonews.com/news/coronavirus/kids-heading-back-to-school-with-relaxed-cdc-virus-guidelines-coronavirus-covid19-omicron-ba5-variant-centers-for-disease-control-and-prevention-vaccine-masking-social-distancing-quarantine</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON (TND) — Kids across the country are preparing to go back to school for another year in the coronavirus pandemic-altered world that has shaken up their lives for the last two years.</p> <p>This will be the first year where COVID-19 vaccinations are available for all school-aged students, a significant feat compared to last school year where some parents were concerned about sending their child to school where masks could be optional and other virus mitigation measures weren't always possible or followed.</p> <p>The start of the new year also comes after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention relaxed its guidelines on dealing with the virus, especially when it comes to isolating after exposure to an infected person and the need to social distance.</p> <p>“COVID-19 and other viruses are still with us, but with multiple prevention and treatment options available, now is not the time for new mandates. Instead, let's ensure these tools are available and accessible: vaccines, testing and masks (and no stigma for those who mask),” American Federation of Teachers president Randi Weingarten said in a statement.</p> <p>Some school districts are still taking extra steps this year to mitigate the spread of the virus. In the District of Columbia, public schools are relaxing many of their mitigation measures like requirements to isolate and stopping daily health screenings when children arrive on campus. Children ages 12 and up will also have to be fully vaccinated to attend class, which is one of the strictest mandates in the U.S.</p> <p>Other large districts, like New York City, are also getting back to pre-pandemic norms by dropping PCR testing and a daily health screening. Vaccines will not be required for students unless they participate in certain extracurricular activities.</p> <p>While it is a welcome change for some, relaxed guidelines are causing some pediatricians stress as they worry about a new resurgence in cases and the potential for another variant.</p> <p>Less than 33% of all children 6 months to 17 years old are fully vaccinated, according to <a href="#">CDC data</a>. The highest vaccination rate is among 16- to 17-year-olds at 66%, followed by 55.2% of 12- to 15-year-olds and 29.6% of 5- to 11-year-olds.</p> <p>Some pediatricians are worried the lack of children with full vaccination status will create preventable outcomes in hospitalizations and deaths.</p> <p><i>We have this incredibly highly infectious strain circulating and it's too soon to sort of throw in the towel and say that there's nothing that remains to be done,” said Dr. Mark Schleiss, a pediatric infectious disease doctor and professor at the University of Minnesota. “There's still a lot that remains to be done.</i></p>

***But first and foremost on that has to be immunizing our kids. And the less than 50% (COVID vaccine) compliance with kids going back to school is, I think, a recipe for disaster.”***

The U.S. is still seeing about 88,000 [new cases](#) a day and 390 deaths, a significant improvement over the pandemic’s onset, though high enough to have public health experts urging for continued caution as society moves on from the pandemic.

With continued spread of the virus, it will have an opportunity to morph into a new variant that is able to work around vaccines and spread more rapidly. Omicron variants make up the entirety of the CDC’s list of variants of concern.

“Only time will tell but these are exactly the kinds of variants of concern that emerged that underscores the importance of maintaining mitigation measures, in particular mass masking and ventilation and not going to school when you’re sick, or testing,” Schleiss said.

Billions in funding has been provided to districts across the country as schools have tried to remain open to make up for the time lost during the pandemic and keep kids in class.

Some public leaders believe they have access to everything they need from at-home tests, widespread vaccine availability, advanced treatments for those who test positive and air filtration systems for classrooms that are no longer being recommended to social distance and mask in most cases, though local health departments and school boards can make decisions on more locally relevant data than the CDC’s broad guidelines.

Congress has been resistant to more pandemic spending despite pleas from the White House to prepare the U.S. for keeping the pandemic in check in the future.

While lawmakers are satisfied with the fiscal response for schools, some doctors are more worried about the message the government is sending through a lack of new funding and relaxed CDC guidelines.

“It’s more than just dollars and cents,” Schleiss said. “It’s the message — and I think the CDC and state health departments could be and should be doing more — it says we’ve forgotten about COVID and most people, if you will, sort of thrown up their hands and want to get on with their daily lives, but I think we’re moving too quickly away from pandemic restrictions.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Tacoma set to clear 2 homeless camps</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/local/tacoma-poised-to-remove-another-problematic-homeless-camp-on-tuesday">https://komonews.com/news/local/tacoma-poised-to-remove-another-problematic-homeless-camp-on-tuesday</a>
GIST	<p>TACOMA, Wash. — The residents of two homeless camps in Tacoma have been put on notice that city crews plans to remove the encampments with one of the sites slated to be cleared out as early as Tuesday morning.</p> <p>That camp is under a highway overpass on Center Street near S. Hosmer Street while residents at a second encampment on Burlington Street near 48th Street have three more weeks before they will be required to pack up and vacate the location.</p> <p>City officials said both camps have created safety concerns.</p> <p>Tacoma officials said the safety concerns linked to the Center Street camp are reflected in the big increase in calls for service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Calls to police and fire for the location jumped to 53 calls in the first half of this year, up from 34 in the first half of last year.</li><li>• As for the surrounding neighborhood, city records show a 1,300 percent increase in calls for help this year compared to last year.</li></ul>



If the city goes through with its plans, the two camps will be 13th and 14th homeless camp to be removed so far this year in Tacoma.

A check of city records shows shelter space is available but people are refusing the offer of help, according to a city spokesperson

A mix of vehicles, tents and trash stretch out along Center Street where Hwy 16 passes overhead. Some of the neighbors have had enough.

“People who are following the law would never be allowed to have a camper like this or this kind of garbage in their yard without being fined,” said a woman named Lori, who did not want to provide her last name.

Others who live in the area said the people in the RVs and tents have real challenges and encampment sweeps don't address those issues.

“I was able to talk to some of the people down there that are homeless and a lot of them are embarrassed, but it's a small percentage,” said Timmi Bare, who has donated food and other items to people living on Tacoma's streets.

The city posted notices that clean-up efforts are set to begin but there's a chance crews could run into resistance.

“I am going to stand right here until they put me in prison,” said a man who has been living in his trailer on Center Street for about two weeks. “Because that's what it's going to take. Because if they touch any of my stuff, I'm doing what Americans should do. Not give up.”

He declined to provide his name but he said the help outreach teams have offered doesn't work for him and he'd rather live in his trailer.

“I'm not getting rid of my home to be controlled by an organization that has no resources,” he said.

Some people want the city to be more aggressive in enforcing the rules about illegal encampments.

“Encampments like this and others throughout the city seem to give the perception that this is the lifestyle that they want to live and that they are allowed to live,” Lori said.

Others said the city needs to refocus its efforts on working with individuals in order to get them off the streets instead of just pushing them to another part of town.

“They need to spend more personal time right here and figure it out,” Bare said.

KOMO News checked about the availability of shelter space, and in the most recent data available, Tacoma showed 36 open beds across five different shelter sites.

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HEADLINE	08/23 US embassy urges citizens leave Ukraine
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/us-embassy-issues-new-security-alert-ukraine-urges-us-citizens-leave-2022-08-23/">https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/us-embassy-issues-new-security-alert-ukraine-urges-us-citizens-leave-2022-08-23/</a>
GIST	KYIV, Aug 23 (Reuters) - The U.S. Embassy in Kyiv, warning of an increased possibility of Russian military strikes on Ukraine in the coming days around Ukrainian independence day, has again urged U.S. citizens to leave if they can.

	<p>"The Department of State has information that Russia is stepping up efforts to launch strikes against Ukraine's civilian infrastructure and government facilities in the coming days," the embassy said in an alert on its website.</p> <p>"The U.S. Embassy urges U.S. citizens to depart Ukraine now using privately available ground transportation options if it is safe to do so," the alert said, repeating the advice of previous security warnings.</p> <p>Kyiv has banned public celebrations in the capital on the anniversary of independence from Soviet rule on Wednesday, citing a heightened threat of attack.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Iran drops some demands for nuclear deal?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/exclusive-iran-has-dropped-some-demands-nuclear-deal-us-official-2022-08-23/">https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/exclusive-iran-has-dropped-some-demands-nuclear-deal-us-official-2022-08-23/</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON, Aug 23 (Reuters) - Iran has dropped some of its main demands on resurrecting a deal to rein in Tehran's nuclear program, including its insistence that international inspectors close some probes of its atomic program, bringing the possibility of an agreement closer, a senior U.S. official told Reuters on Monday.</p> <p>The United States aims to respond soon to a draft agreement proposed by the European Union that would bring back the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran that former President Donald Trump abandoned and current President Joe Biden has sought to revive.</p> <p>The official, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter, said that although Tehran has been saying Washington has made concessions, Iran has dropped some of its key demands.</p> <p>"They came back last week and basically dropped the main hang-ups to a deal," the official said.</p> <p>"We think they have finally crossed the Rubicon and moved toward possibly getting back into the deal on terms that President Biden can accept," the official added. "If we are closer today, it's because Iran has moved. They conceded on issues that they have been holding onto from the beginning."</p> <p>Iran's foreign ministry had no immediate comment.</p> <p>Iran had already largely relented on its demand that the United States lift its designation of the Iran Revolutionary Guard Corps as a foreign terrorist organization (FTO) entity, the official said.</p> <p>"We said under no circumstances would we do that. They continued to push it. A month ago they started to soften that core demand and said you can keep the (FTO) designation but we would like lift it from a number of companies affiliated with the IRGC. We said 'no we're not going to do that,'" he added.</p> <p>Iran also wanted a guarantee that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) would close investigations involving unexplained traces of uranium.</p> <p>"Iran wants guarantees that the IAEA would close all of them. We said we would never accept that," the official said.</p> <p>The IAEA board of governors in June overwhelmingly passed a resolution criticizing Iran for failing to explain the presence of uranium traces at three undeclared sites.</p> <p>The official said that gaps remain between the United States and Iran and that "it could take a little longer" to come to a final agreement, if one is possible.</p>

"We're studying Iran's response now and we'll get back to them soon," the official said.

Earlier, State Department spokesman Ned Price said there was no guarantee a deal can be struck, saying "the outcome of these ongoing discussions still remains uncertain as gaps do remain."

Washington would have to lift some sanctions under the terms of the agreement, but U.S. officials say returning to the deal is crucial to preventing a nuclear crisis in the Middle East.

"If we get this deal, yes, we do lift some sanctions, but Iran has to dismantle its nuclear program," the official said.

All this comes at a time when Iran is thought to have enough enriched uranium to - if further purified - build multiple weapons, and is closer than ever to being able to produce them, the official said.

The nuclear deal between Iran and world powers appeared near revival in March after 11 months of indirect U.S.-Iran talks in Vienna.

But negotiations broke down over obstacles such as Iran's desire to remove the Revolutionary Guards from the FTO list.

Iran has also demanded the United States guarantee that no future U.S. president would abandon the deal. Biden cannot provide such ironclad assurances because the deal is a political understanding rather than a legally binding treaty.

A second official said that under full implementation of the deal, the IAEA would be able to resume a comprehensive inspections regime that could detect any Iranian effort to pursue a nuclear weapon covertly. Much of this monitoring would remain in place indefinitely.

This official also said Iran would be prohibited from enriching and stockpiling uranium above very limited levels, denying it the material required for a bomb.

In addition, the official said, Iran would not be permitted to have any of the 20% and 60% enriched uranium that it is stockpiling today; advanced centrifuges Iran is operating would be stopped and removed, including all of the centrifuges at its fortified underground facility at Fordow.

"Strict limits on Iranian enrichment would mean that even if Iran left the deal to pursue a nuclear weapon, it would take at least six months to do so," the official said.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Europe economy succumbs to crisis</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraine-war-drags-europes-economy-succumbs-crisis-2022-08-23/">https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraine-war-drags-europes-economy-succumbs-crisis-2022-08-23/</a>
GIST	<p>FRANKFURT, Aug 23 (Reuters) - It was meant to be Europe's stellar year.</p> <p>A post-pandemic spending euphoria, supported by copious government spending was set to drive the economy and help fatigued households regain a sense of normality after two dreadful years.</p> <p>But all that changed on Feb. 24 with Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Normality is gone and crisis has become permanent.</p> <p>A recession is now almost certain, inflation is nearing double digits and a winter with looming energy shortages is fast approaching.</p> <p>Though bleak, this outlook is still likely to get worse before any significant improvement well into 2023.</p>

"Crisis is the new normal," says the Alexandre Bompard, the Chief Executive of retailer Carrefour. "What we have been used to in the last decades - low inflation, international trade - it's over," he told investors.

The change is dramatic. A year ago most forecasters predicted 2022 economic growth near 5%. Now a winter recession is becoming the base case.

Households and businesses are both suffering as the fallout of the war - high food and energy prices - is now exacerbated by a devastating drought and low river levels that constrain transport.

At 9%, inflation in the euro area is at levels not seen in a half a century and it is sapping purchasing power with spare cash used up on petrol, natural gas and staple food.

Retail sales are already plunging, months before the heating season starts and shoppers are scaling down their buys. In June, retail sales volumes were down nearly 4% from a year earlier, led by a 9% drop recorded in Germany.

Consumers turn to discount chains and give up high end products, switching to discount brands. They have also started to skip certain purchases.

"Life is becoming more expensive and consumers are reluctant to consume," Robert Gentz, the co-CEO of German retailer Zalando, told reporters.

Businesses have so far coped well thanks to superb pricing power due to persistent supply constraints. But energy intensive sectors are already suffering.

Close to half of Europe's aluminium and zinc smelting capacity is already offline while much of fertilizer production, which relies on natural gas, has been shut.

Tourism has been the rare bright spot with people looking to spend some of accumulated savings and enjoy their first care-free summer since 2019.

But even the travel sector is hamstrung by capacity and labour shortages as workers laid off during the pandemic were reluctant to return.

Key airports, such as Frankfurt and London Heathrow were forced to cap flights simply because they lacked the staff to process passengers. At Amsterdam's Schiphol, waiting times could stretch to four or five hours this summer.

Airlines also could not cope. Germany's Lufthansa (LHAG.DE) had to publish an apology to customers for the chaos, admitting that it was unlikely to ease anytime soon.

## RECESSION LOOMS

That pain is likely to intensify, especially if Russia cuts gas exports further.

"The gas shock today is much greater; it is almost double the shock that we had back in the 70s with oil," Caroline Bain at Capital Economics said. "We've seen a 10 to 11 fold increase in the spot price of natural gas in Europe over the last two years."

While the EU has unveiled plans to accelerate its transition to renewable energy and wean the bloc off Russian gas by 2027, making it more resilient in the long run, supply shortages are forcing it seek a 15% cut in gas consumption this year. [read more](#)

But energy independence comes at a cost.

For ordinary people it will mean colder homes and offices in the short run. Germany for instance wants public spaces heated only to 19 degrees Celsius this winter compared with around 22 degrees previously.

Further out, it will mean higher energy costs and thus inflation as the bloc must give up its biggest and cheapest energy supplies.

For businesses, it will mean lower production, which eats further into growth, particularly in industry.

Wholesale gas prices in Germany, the bloc's biggest economy, are up five-fold in a year but consumers are protected by long term contracts, so the impact so far has been far smaller.

Still, they will have to pay a government mandated levy and once contracts roll over, prices will soar, suggesting the impact will just come with a delay, putting persistent upward pressure on inflation.

That is why many if not most economists see Germany and Italy, Europe's no. 1 and no. 4 economies with heavy reliance on gas, entering a recession soon.

While a recession in the United States is also likely, its origin will be quite different.

#### SILVER LINING

Struggling with a red-hot labour market and rapid wage growth, the U.S. Federal Reserve has been raising interest rates quickly and has made clear it is willing to risk even a recession to tame price growth.

By contrast, the European Central Bank has only increased rates once, back to zero, and will move only cautiously, mindful that raising the borrowing cost of highly indebted euro zone nations, such as Italy, Spain and Greece could fuel worries about their ability to keep paying their debts.

But Europe will go into a recession with some strengths.

Employment is record high and firms have struggled with growing labour scarcity for years.

This suggests that companies will be keen to hang onto workers, especially since they head for the downturn with relatively healthy margins.

This could then sustain purchasing power, pointing to a relatively shallow recession with only a modest uptick in what is now a record low jobless rate.

"We see continued acute shortages of labour, historically low unemployment and a high number of vacancies," ECB board member Isabel Schnabel told Reuters earlier. "This probably implies that even if we enter a downturn, firms may be quite reluctant to shed workers on a broad scale."

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Taiwan warns China: heavy price invasion</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/taiwan-will-continue-work-with-us-bolstering-its-defences-president-says-2022-08-23/">https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/taiwan-will-continue-work-with-us-bolstering-its-defences-president-says-2022-08-23/</a>
GIST	<p>TAIPEI, Aug 23 (Reuters) - Taiwan is determined to defend itself and invaders will incur a "heavy price", President Tsai Ing-wen said on Tuesday on the anniversary of a confrontation six decade ago in which Taiwanese forces beat back Chinese attackers.</p> <p>Tensions between Taiwan and China have spiked over the past month following the visit to Taipei by U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. China staged war games near Taiwan to express its anger at what it saw as stepped up U.S. support for the island Beijing views as sovereign Chinese territory.</p> <p>Meeting military officers, Tsai extolled the "spirit" of defending against China's more than a month of bombardment of the Taiwan-controlled islands of Kinmen and Matsu, just off the Chinese coast, which started in late August 1958.</p>

"This battle defended Taiwan for us, and it also declared to the world that no threat can shake the determination of the Taiwanese people to defend their country," Tsai said, in comments released by her office.

"What we have to do is to let the enemy understand that Taiwan has the determination and preparation to defend the country, as well as the ability to defend itself," she added.

"A heavy price will be paid for invading Taiwan or attempting to invade Taiwan, and it will be strongly condemned by the international community."

Meeting earlier in the day with a delegation of former U.S. officials now at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, including Matt Pottinger, former U.S. President Donald Trump's deputy national security adviser, Tsai said that the 1958 battle paved the way for today's Taiwan.

"Sixty-four years ago during the Aug. 23 battle, our soldiers and civilians operated in solidarity and safeguarded Taiwan, so that we have the democratic Taiwan today," she said, using the Taiwanese term for that campaign, which ended in stalemate with China failing to take the islands.

Taiwan fought then with support from the United States, which sent military equipment including advanced Sidewinder anti-aircraft missiles, giving Taiwan a technological edge.

Often called the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, it was the last time Taiwanese forces joined battle with China on a large scale.

#### U.S. COMMITMENT

Among the U.S. visitors was James O. Ellis, a retired U.S. Navy admiral who said his delegation's presence reaffirmed the American people's commitment to deepening cooperation.

"Consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act, part of this cooperation involves strengthening Taiwan's capabilities for self defence as well as the ability of the United States to deter and resist any resort to force across the Taiwan Strait," Ellis told Tsai, referring to a U.S. law that requires it to provide Taiwan with the means to defend itself.

The United States, which ditched formal diplomatic relations with Taipei in favour of Beijing in 1979, remains Taiwan's most important source of arms.

"As Taiwan stands on the front line of authoritarian expansionism we continue to bolster our defence autonomy, and we will also continue to work with the United States on this front," Tsai said.

China's drills near Taiwan have posed a threat to the status quo in the strait and across the region, and democratic partners should work together to "defend against interference by authoritarian states", she added.

Following that meeting, Tsai met two Japanese lawmakers, and other foreign parliamentarians are also expected to visit this year, including from Canada and Britain, defying Chinese pressure not to go.

Taiwan's government says that as the People's Republic of China has never governed the island it has no right to claim it or decide its future, which can only be set by Taiwan's 23 million people.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Significant section Beirut port silo collapse</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-fires-lebanon-beirut-04bde73ca07d71748475ae0295a38f3c">https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-fires-lebanon-beirut-04bde73ca07d71748475ae0295a38f3c</a>
GIST	BEIRUT (AP) — Another significant section of the devastated Beirut Port silos collapsed on Tuesday morning in a cloud of dust. No injuries were reported — the area had been long evacuated — but the collapse was another painful reminder of the horrific August 2020 explosion.



The collapse left the silos' southern part standing next to a pile of charred ruins. The northern block had already been slowly tipping over since the initial explosion two years ago but rapidly deteriorated after it caught fire over a month ago due to fermenting grains.

The 50 year old, 48 meter (157 feet) tall silos had withstood the force of the explosion on Aug. 4, 2020, effectively shielding the western part of Beirut from the blast that killed over 200 people, injured more than 6,000 and badly damaged entire neighborhoods.

Emmanuel Durand, a French civil engineer who volunteered for the government-commissioned team of experts, told The Associated Press that the speed of the tilt rapidly accelerated overnight on Monday, just hours before the collapse.

"There was a very sharp acceleration, which was expected," Durand explained. "When this happens, you know it's going to go."

The country's caretaker environment minister, Nasser Yassin, told Lebanese TV that the government will now look into how to ensure the southern block remains standing. He urged residents near the port to wear masks, and said experts would conduct air quality tests.

In April, the Lebanese government decided to demolish the silos, but suspended the decision following protests from families of the blast's victims and survivors. They contend that the silos may contain evidence useful for the [judicial probe](#), and that it should stand as a memorial for the 2020 tragedy.

In July, a [fire broke out in the northern block of the silos due to the fermenting grains](#). Firefighters and Lebanese Army soldiers were unable to put it out and it smoldered for over a month. Officials had warned that the silo could collapse, but feared risking the lives of firefighters and soldiers who struggled to get too close to put out the blaze or drop containers of water from helicopters.

Survivors of the blast and residents near the port have told the AP that watching the fire from their homes and offices was like [reliving the trauma from the port blast](#), which started with a fire in a warehouse near the silos that contained hundreds of tons of explosive ammonium nitrate, improperly stored there for years.

The environment and health ministries in late July issued instructions to residents living near the port to stay indoors in well-ventilated spaces.

Durand last month told the AP that the fire from the grains had sped up the speed of the tilt of the shredded silo and caused irreversible damage to its weak concrete foundation.

The structure has rapidly deteriorated ever since. In late July, part of the northern block [collapsed for the first time](#). Days later on the second anniversary of the Beirut Port blast, [roughly a fourth of the structure collapsed](#). On Sunday, the fire expanded to large sections of the silo.

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HEADLINE	08/23 Ukraine fights war, faces painful aftermath
SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-kyiv-69e6c08b0c90199f3ea0d3ea6e1d1c05">https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-kyiv-69e6c08b0c90199f3ea0d3ea6e1d1c05</a>
GIST	<p>CHERNIHIV, Ukraine (AP) — Danyk Rak enjoys riding his bike, playing soccer and quiet moments with the family's short-legged dog and two white cats, Pushuna and Lizun.</p> <p>But at age 12, his childhood has been abruptly cut short. His family's home was destroyed and his mother seriously wounded as Russian forces bombarded Kyiv's suburbs and surrounding towns in a failed effort to seize the capital.</p>

Six months after Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine, and with no end to the conflict in sight, The Associated Press revisited Danyk as well as a police officer and an Orthodox priest whose lives have been upended by war.

#### “I WANT TO BE AN AIR FORCE PILOT”

Tears come to Danyk’s eyes as his mother, Luda, recalls being pulled from the rubble, covered in blood, after shrapnel tore through her body and smashed her right foot.

Twenty-two weeks after she was wounded, she’s still waiting to have her foot amputated and to be fitted with a prosthetic. She keeps the piece of shrapnel surgeons removed during one of her many operations.

Danyk lives with his mother and grandmother in a house near Chernihiv, a town 140 kilometers (nearly 90 miles) north of Kyiv, where a piece of tarp covers the broken bedroom windows. He sells milk from the family’s cow that grazes in the nearby fields. A handwritten sign wrapped in clear plastic on the front gate reads: “Please buy milk to help my mother who is injured.”

“My mother needs surgery and that’s why I have to help her. I have to help my grandmother too because she has heart problems,” Danyk said.

Before schools reopen on Sept. 1, Danyk and his grandmother have been joining volunteers several days a week clearing the debris from buildings damaged and destroyed in the Russian bombardment outside Chernihiv. On the way, he stops at his old house, most of it smashed to the foundations.

“This was my bedroom,” he says, standing next to scorched mattress springs that protrude from the rubble of bricks and plaster.

Polite and soft spoken, Danyk says his father and stepfather are both fighting in the Ukrainian army.

“My father is a soldier, my uncles are soldiers and my grandfather was a soldier, too. My stepfather is a soldier and I will be a soldier,” he says with a look of determination. “I want to be an air force pilot.”

#### “THIS BRIDGE WAS THE ROAD FROM HELL”

Before the Russian withdrawal from Kyiv and surrounding areas on April 2, suburbs and towns near the city’s airport were pounded by rockets, artillery fire and aerial bombardment in an effort to break the Ukrainian defenses.

Entire city blocks of apartments were blackened by the shelling in Irpin, just 20 kilometers (12 miles) northwest of the capital, along a route where police Lt. Ruslan Huseinov patrolled daily.

Some of the most dramatic scenes from the early stages of the war were of the evacuation from Irpin underneath a destroyed highway bridge, where thousands escaped the relentless attacks.

Huseinov was there for 16 days, organizing crossings where the elderly were carried along muddy pathways in wheelbarrows.

Reconstruction work has begun on the bridge, where mangled concrete and iron bars hang over the river. Clothing and shoes from those who fled can still be seen tangled in the debris.

“This bridge was the road from hell,” says Huseinov, 34, standing next to an overturned white van still lodged into a slab of smashed concrete.

“We got people out of (Irpin) because conditions were terrible — with bombing and shelling,” he said. “People were really scared because many lost their children, members of their family, their brothers and sisters.”

Crosses made from construction wood are still nailed to the railings of the bridge to honor those lost and the effort to save civilians.

“The whole world witnessed our solidarity,” says Huseinov, who grew up in Germany and says he would never again take the good things in life for granted.

“In my mind, everything has changed: My values in life,” he said. “Now I understand what we have to lose.”

#### “BEFORE THE WAR, IT WAS ANOTHER LIFE”

The floor of the Church of Andrew the Apostle has been re-tiled and bullet holes in the walls plastered over and repainted — but the horror of what happened in March lies only a few yards away.

The largest mass grave in Bucha — a town outside Kyiv that has become synonymous with the brutality of the Russian attack — is behind the church.

“This grave contained 116 people, including 30 women, and two children,” said Father Andriy, who has conducted multiple burial services for civilians found shot dead or killed by shelling, some still only identified as a number while the effort to name all of Bucha’s victims continues.

Many of the bodies were found before the Russians pulled out of the Kyiv region, Father Andriy said.

“We couldn’t bury people in the cemetery because it’s on the outskirts of the city. They left people, dead people, lying in the street. Dead people were found still in their cars. They were trying to leave but the Russians shelled them,” said Father Andriy, wearing a large cross around his neck and a dark purple cassock.

“That situation lasted two weeks, and the local authorities began coming up with solutions (to help) relatives and loved ones. It was bad weather and wild animals were discovering the bodies. So something had to be done.”

He decided to carry out burial services in the church yard, many next to where the bodies had been discovered.

The experience, he said, has left people in the town badly shaken.

“I think that, neither myself or anyone who lives in Ukraine, who witnessed the war, can understand why this happened,” he said.

“Before the war, it was another life.”

“For now we are surviving on adrenaline,” he said. “But I’m worried that the aftermath will last decades. It will be hard to get past this and turn the page. Saying the word ‘forgive’ isn’t difficult. But to say it from your heart — for now, that’s not possible.”

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HEADLINE	08/22 Home prices plunge as market slumps
SOURCE	<a href="https://nypost.com/2022/08/22/home-prices-plunging-in-pandemic-boomtowns-as-market-slumps/">https://nypost.com/2022/08/22/home-prices-plunging-in-pandemic-boomtowns-as-market-slumps/</a>
GIST	Homeowners in markets that boomed when the real estate sector was red-hot during the COVID-19 pandemic are now forced to slash prices due to dwindling demand, according to data released Monday by Redfin.

Across the US, 21% of home sellers dropped their asking prices in July – the highest share since Redfin began tracking the metric in 2012, [according to the firm](#). The shares of homes with price drops in July compared to one year ago increased in 94 of 97 metro areas surveyed.

The trend was at its worst in “pandemic home-buying boomtowns” such as Boise, Idaho, where a whopping 69.7% of homes for sale slashed listing prices in July. Other overheated markets included Denver, with a 58% of price drops, and Salt Lake City, with a 54.8% share of cuts.

“Individual home sellers and builders were both quick to drop their prices early this summer, mostly because they had unrealistic expectations of both price and timelines,” Boise-based Redfin agent Shauna Pendleton said.

“They priced too high because their neighbor’s home sold for an exorbitant price a few months ago, and expected to receive multiple offers the first weekend because they heard stories about that happening,” Pendleton added.

The US housing market has cooled considerably in recent months as the Federal Reserve tightens monetary policy to address rampant inflation. Mortgage rates have surged above 5%, nearly twice as high as they were in January.

The spike in mortgage rates has compounded an affordability crisis for prospective buyers contending with the effects of inflation on their budgets as well as sky-high home prices. The trend has sapped demand and left sellers with little choice but to dial down their expectations.

Other metro areas with a share of home price cuts above 50% included Tacoma, Wash.; Tampa, Fla.; Sacramento, Calif.; Indianapolis, and Phoenix, according to Redfin.

Overall, home sales fell by 19.3% in July compared to one year earlier, Redfin’s data showed. Activity has reached its lowest point since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Sales have declined for six straight months.

“Some prospective homebuyers were sidelined because they were priced out of the market; others were wary of potential home-value declines in the near future,” the firm said in a release.

[As The Post reported](#), Ian Shepherdson, the chief economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics, said in a note to clients last week that the market’s slump is “still nowhere near the bottom, especially for prices.”

“The bottom is still some way off, given the degree to which demand has been crushed by rising rates; the required monthly mortgage payment for a new purchaser of an existing single-family home is no longer rising, but it was still up by 51% year-over-year in July,” Shepherdson said in a note to clients.

[Credit rating agency Fitch](#) has also warned of a looming decline, projecting that prices could eventually fall by up to 15% in the event of major housing slump.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 India farmers protest in New Delhi</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/22/india/india-farmers-protests-return-delhi-intl-hnk/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/22/india/india-farmers-protests-return-delhi-intl-hnk/index.html</a>
GIST	<p><b>New Delhi</b> Protesters broke barricades and shouted slogans against <a href="#">Prime Minister Narendra Modi</a> in the <a href="#">Indian</a> capital of New Delhi on Monday, after thousands of farmers gathered to protest against what they said were <a href="#">unfulfilled promises</a> by the government.</p> <p>More than eight months after farmers called off a <a href="#">year-long protest</a> and the government conceded to several of their demands, more than 5,000 farmers gathered in the center of the capital to protest against Modi and his government.</p>

	<p>Farmers are demanding that the government guarantee a minimum support price for all produce and clear all farmer debts, among other things, according to a statement from the Samyukta Kisan Morcha, the farmer organization that organized the protest on Monday.</p> <p>A spokesperson for the Federal Agriculture Ministry did not respond to a request for comment.</p> <p>Protesters wielded banners and flags and broke through barriers as they marched toward the venue, shouting slogans against Modi.</p> <p>Last November, Modi said he would <a href="#">roll back three farm laws</a> that had aimed to deregulate produce markets but which farmers said would allow corporations to exploit them.</p> <p>The federal government also agreed to set up a panel of growers and government officials to find ways of ensuring Minimum Support Prices (MSP), as the guaranteed rates are called, for all farm produce.</p> <p>Last month, the federal government set up the panel and invited representatives of farmer organizations to join in.</p> <p>Security around the borders of the national capital was tightened and police presence was heightened in and around the protest area.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Mexico City work-from-home for US expats</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/22/business/mexico-city-work-from-home-us-expats/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/22/business/mexico-city-work-from-home-us-expats/index.html</a>
GIST	<p>(CNN Business)Sandra Ortiz struggles to <a href="#">talk about her family's restaurant</a> without breaking down into tears.</p> <p>"They arrived and told us we had five minutes to get everything out," Ortiz said, recalling her family's eviction in February.</p> <p>Ortiz, 55, and her four siblings had taken over Tortería Colima from their father, who started it as a bakery in 1968. The siblings expanded it into a restaurant, which grew popular among locals in Mexico City.</p> <p>For 54 years, the Ortiz family ran its business from the ground floor of a four-story building, located at a busy corner in the increasingly desirable Roma neighborhood.</p> <p>But in recent years, the family watched as the community around them changed. An influx of foreigners, mostly from the US, inspired Mexican landlords to renovate and remodel their properties to accommodate the wealthier arrivals. Ortiz watched as visitors and tourists suddenly became full-time neighbors.</p> <p><a href="#">"Prices are much higher,"</a> she said. "It's difficult because a lot of these foreigners come, and they have a bunch of money to be able to spend on these apartments and rents."</p> <p>The Ortiz's landlord followed the business trend. The family tried to push back and keep their space, but after a lengthy legal battle they were ultimately evicted in February. More than a half century of belongings were piled up on the street as they were forced out. The building is now being renovated into high-end apartments.</p> <p>"A lot of pain ... They hurt me a lot," Ortiz said, washing dishes alongside two of her sisters. They now work at another restaurant — no longer as owners but as employees — in a far less central location than Tortería Colima.</p> <p>Ortiz admitted the <a href="#">crippling impacts of Covid-19 and rising global inflation</a> have compounded the situation, and she does not fault foreigners for wanting to visit Mexico City. But she worries that as more US expats arrive to stay, more locals will be pushed out.</p>

As renovations are underway in the floors above their now-shuttered restaurant, across the street sits a storefront with a sign appealing to new residents. It reads: "Hello Mexico City!" ... in English.

**"Please leave, we don't want you here!"**

It's not hard for locals to understand the appeal of relocating from the [United States](#) to Mexico City.

"It's pretty, their money is worth more here, they can live in a house or apartment that's really nice and big, create a better life," Fernando Bustos Gorozpe said. "But it's not as though there's an interest to participate and understand the local culture here."

Bustos Gorozpe is a university professor who was born and raised in Mexico City. He noticed the trend of American expats traveling to Mexico's capital accelerated with Covid-19, since [Mexico](#) had fewer border restrictions than other countries. That coincided with a [growing number of US companies allowing their employees to work remotely](#). Many chose to do that south of the border, in Mexico City.

The US State Department says 1.6 million US citizens live in Mexico. But it doesn't know how many are living and working there on tourist visas. The Mexican government does not track that data either, but it recorded more than 5.3 million American tourists flying into Mexican airports from January to May 2022. That's nearly a million more compared with that same period in 2019.

Real estate agent Edyta Norejko said she gets dozens of calls weekly from Americans inquiring about relocating to Mexico City.

"It is very often from Los Angeles or New York City," she said, adding that most are looking to avoid the rising costs of living in the United States and cash in on a strong exchange rate.

In 2014, Norejko, who's originally from Poland, and her husband, Eduardo Alvarez, a Mexico City native, created their real estate firm with foreigners in mind. They say about 70% of their business comes from clients outside of Mexico who aspire to live in the country's capital city.

"There is a lot of benefit about the foreigners living in Mexico City," Norejko said, referring to the tourism revenue generated by Americans traveling to Mexico. "We need them."

In the first five months of 2022, tourism from US travelers generated nearly \$11.5 billion in revenue for Mexico, according to the country's secretary of tourism. It's on track to surpass pre-pandemic levels.

"It's money that comes in, but that only ends up in the hands of a few people," Bustos Gorozpe. "And locals end up displaced because they can no longer pay for these areas that've become very expensive."

In neighborhoods like Roma and Condesa, charming cafes and trendy restaurants now cater to English-speaking expats. Bustos Gorozpe has noticed fewer foreigners making the effort to speak Spanish, and in some cases assuming the locals should understand English. That's led to frustrations rising among some residents.

"Of course, this is not like, 'We hate people from the outside,'" Bustos Gorozpe said.

But Bustos Gorozpe said signs posted in one gentrified community do express a growing anger.

"They read, 'Please leave, we don't want you here!'"

**Digital Nomads**

Among the US expats who've flocked to Mexico City in recent months is 37-year-old Erik Rodriguez. Rodriguez originally traveling to Mexico City as a tourist, and now lives in the city and works remotely as an economic development analyst for a US-based agency.



	<p>Although his grandparents were born in Mexico, Rodriguez admitted he's not in Mexico City to rediscover his roots or improve his Spanish, of which he speaks only a little. He's there to save money while still enjoying a quality lifestyle.</p> <p>"In San Diego my apartment (a studio) was probably \$2,500 (a month)," he said. "Here I have a one bedroom and I pay \$800 a month."</p> <p>Rodriguez and other so-called, 'digital nomads', can be seen in city cafes or in parks, laptops open, busy at work. He said when he first arrived in Mexico City, he felt nothing but welcomed.</p> <p>"I think there was a sense of 'we want people to come here to stimulate the economy. Thank you for being here.' But I know that recently there's been complaints from locals about the effect that expats living here has had on their own lifestyles," he said.</p> <p>Rodriguez says he isn't sure about staying in Mexico long term. But, he added, "It is starting to feel like home."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Fatal car crashes increasing; risky driving?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/fatal-car-crash-increase-risky-driving-rcna43969">https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/fatal-car-crash-increase-risky-driving-rcna43969</a>
GIST	<p>Car crashes are killing more and more people since the start of the pandemic — even though the volume of traffic hasn't risen above pre-pandemic levels.</p> <p>Deaths from car crashes in the first few months of this year <a href="#">hit the highest quarterly total since 2002</a>, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration announced last week.</p> <p>Traffic deaths <a href="#">were up by 7%</a> compared to the first quarter of 2021, and last year's <a href="#">auto deaths were already at a 15-year high</a>.</p> <p>It's a reversal from the pre-pandemic trend: Deaths from car crashes in the U.S. declined for three years leading up to 2020.</p> <p>But then the number began to increase even though <a href="#">people drove less in 2020</a>, and 2021 traffic volume was relatively the same as in 2019, according to federal data.</p> <p>Compared to the first quarter of 2019, the 2022 traffic deaths represent a 22% jump.</p> <p>"We hoped that was just some unusual blip due to the pandemic, but fatalities have continued to increase," said Arthur Goodwin, a senior research associate at the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center.</p> <p>Goodwin and other road safety experts attribute the increase to riskier driving as fewer people wear seat belts and as speeding and impaired driving rise, among other factors.</p> <p>David Harkey, the president of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, said risky driving behaviors "were exacerbated during the pandemic, and they seem to have this hangover effect that's now occurring."</p> <p>Three Indiana State University students died in a crash Sunday after a vehicle veered off the road and into a tree.</p> <p>Six people, including a pregnant woman and a 3-year-old child, <a href="#">were killed this month in a multivehicle crash</a> in Los Angeles. Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascón said one of the vehicles ran a red light at more than 90 mph.</p>

A few days earlier, seven people, five of them children, died [in a fiery collision](#) in Hampshire, Illinois. [Actor Anne Heche](#) and [Rep. Jackie Walorski, R-Ind.](#), died in car crashes this month, as well.

Why are people driving more recklessly?

A [2020 survey](#) from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found that people who drove more than usual during the pandemic were more likely to engage in riskier behaviors, including reading text messages, speeding, running red lights on purpose, aggressively changing lanes, not wearing seat belts or driving after having consumed alcohol or cannabis.

"A fatality crash is much more likely if somebody isn't wearing their seat belt or somebody's speeding," Goodwin said.

In 2020, [deaths from speeding-related crashes increased by 17%](#) and deaths from alcohol-impaired driving rose by 14% compared to 2019.

Open highways during the pandemic may have tempted drivers to go faster, experts said. They also pointed to a lack of law enforcement on the road due, in part, to worries about Covid safety and racial profiling. (Black drivers are [far more likely to be stopped and searched](#) than white drivers.)

"There was this concern of not pulling people over, not engaging with individuals during the pandemic," Harkey said.

In a [survey last year](#) of more than 1,000 police officers and deputies, nearly 60% of officers said they were less likely to stop vehicles than they were before 2020. In Illinois, the number of reported traffic stops [fell by 37% from 2019 to 2020](#) after a steady increase from 2015 to 2019. And in Vermont, [40% fewer cars were stopped in 2020](#) than in 2019.

Goodwin said law enforcement has "pretty much returned to where it was before the pandemic," but he speculated that drivers might still have the perception that "they can speed and engage in other potentially risky behaviors and get away with it."

He added that it's hard to know how long the trend will continue: "It's already lasted longer than we thought it might."

Goodwin also noted that, counterintuitively, the total number of car crashes decreased from 2019 to 2020. According to the Transportation Department, police-reported crashes [fell by 22% in that time](#) (the most recent data available), and the number of people injured on roadways decreased by 17%.

### **Young drivers may be using their phones at the wheel**

Cara Hamann, an assistant professor of epidemiology at the University of Iowa College of Public Health who researches transportation safety, pointed to another well-known factor that may have contributed to the rise in traffic deaths: phones.

"Everybody's checking their phones and distracted while they're driving," Hamann said. "It is a formula for tragedy, essentially."

For young drivers, she said, that means texting or even watching videos while at the wheel.

"We know younger drivers as a whole are a somewhat riskier group," Goodwin said.

The Transportation Department found that the number of older drivers — people ages 65 and up — involved in fatal crashes decreased by nearly 10% from 2019 to 2020.

"That's probably because there were fewer older drivers out there on the road, and they've been slower to return," Goodwin said.

### What can be done?

One of the simplest ways to reduce traffic deaths is to hold drivers accountable for breaking the law, Goodwin said.

"We really need to renew law enforcement efforts to make sure that drivers are aware that officers are out on the roads looking for impaired drivers, drivers who are not wearing seat belts and drivers who are speeding," he said.

Changes to road and car design could also reduce speeding, experts agreed.

Hamann said many roads allow people to go faster than the speed limit.

"Maybe the posted speed limit is 25 or 30, but it's easy to feel safe driving 40 or 50," she said. "That is an engineering problem or a design problem that should be fixed."

Making roads narrower or installing roundabouts, speed bumps or automated cameras that capture traffic violations could address the problem, she said.

The Transportation Department [set up a \\$5 billion program](#) this year to prevent roadway deaths and injuries by offering grants for projects that lower speed limits or improve road design.

Car features like automatic emergency brakes, seat belt reminders and lower horsepower could also encourage safer driving, Harkey added.

"Horsepower in vehicles has changed over time, and it continues to increase," he said. "More horsepower means people drive faster."

But experts worry that reckless driving has become the new normal.

"The trends are very concerning," Goodwin said. "We need to figure this out quickly so we can turn these trends around."

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HEADLINE	08/22 Pentagon again denies D.C. support request
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.foxnews.com/us/washington-dc-mayor-bowers-second-request-national-guard-migrant-crisis-denied-pentagon">https://www.foxnews.com/us/washington-dc-mayor-bowers-second-request-national-guard-migrant-crisis-denied-pentagon</a>
GIST	<p>For the second time, the Pentagon denied a request on Monday by Washington, D.C., Mayor Muriel Bowser to activate the National Guard to assist with <a href="#">thousands of migrants</a> who have been arriving in the nation's capital in recent months.</p> <p>Bowser first asked for National Guard help last month, but it was rejected by the Pentagon on Aug. 4. She <a href="#">then sent another letter</a> on Aug. 11, requesting that 150 National Guard troops be deployed to "help prevent a prolonged humanitarian crisis in our nation's capital resulting from the daily arrival of migrants."</p> <p>Defense Department executive secretary Kelly Bulliner Holly wrote in a letter to Bowser on Monday that the D.C. National Guard is not trained to assist migrants and activation would lead to "diminished readiness" for the troops.</p> <p>"The DCNG has no specific experience in or training for this kind of mission or unique skills for providing facility management, feeding, sanitation or ground support," Holly wrote in the letter, which was reviewed by Fox News.</p>

"Approval of this request would also result in a substantial readiness impact to the DCNG," Holly continued. "Devoting the personnel or the facility for such an extended mission would force the cancellation or disruption of [military training](#)."

About 7,000 migrants have been [bused from Texas](#) to Washington, D.C., since April and another 900 have arrived in New York City, according to Gov. Greg Abbott's office.

"Before we began busing migrants to New York, it was just Texas and Arizona that bore the brunt of all the chaos and problems that come with it," Abbott said Friday. "Now, the rest of America can understand exactly what is going on."

Bowser called the busing of migrants on Monday a "politically motivated stunt."

"We struggle with a broken immigration system in our country, and we know that cities alone cannot fix it," Bowser tweeted. "We will continue working with federal partners and local NGOs on the best way to set up systems that allow us to manage an ongoing humanitarian crisis."

Texas launched Operation Lone Star to deal with the influx of migrants across the southern border in March 2021.

Since then, Texas [law enforcement officials](#) have apprehended nearly 300,000 migrants and seized 326 million lethal doses of fentanyl, Abbott said.

The Pentagon also cited the work of several non-government organizations and civilian groups in assisting with the arrival of migrants.

Bowser's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Monday.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 California to pay health benefits to illegals</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/california-protect-health-benefits-young-immigrants-88716038">https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/california-protect-health-benefits-young-immigrants-88716038</a>
GIST	<p>SACRAMENTO, Calif. -- About 40,000 low-income adults living in the country illegally won't lose their government-funded health insurance over the next year under a new policy announced Monday by California Gov. Gavin Newsom's administration.</p> <p>California already pays for the health care expenses of low-income adults 25 and younger, regardless of their immigration status. A new law scheduled to take effect in January 2024 would extend those benefits to cover all adults who, but for their immigration status, would qualify for the state's Medicaid program.</p> <p>But between now and when that new law takes effect in 2024, about 40,000 young adults who already have Medicaid in California are expected to lose their benefits because they are older than 25. Monday, the state Department of Health Care Services announced it would continue to cover those young adults through the end of 2023 to make sure they won't lose their benefits.</p> <p>"Providing continuous coverage means that tens of thousands of young Californians won't face a disruptions in care, keeping them covered and healthier as a result," said Jose Torres Casillas, policy and legislative advocate for Health Access California, a consumer health care advocacy group. "California is again leading the way in making our health care system work better for all communities, regardless of income, age, or immigration status."</p> <p>Nationwide, about 22.1 million people were living in the country illegally in 2020, or about 7% of the population, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation, a health care nonprofit. These people are not eligible for most federal public benefit programs, even though many have jobs and pay taxes.</p>

Some states, including California, have used their own money to cover the health care expenses of this group. Eighteen states provide prenatal care to people regardless of their immigration status, while five states and the District of Columbia cover all children from low-income families regardless of their immigration status. California and Illinois recently made older adult immigrants eligible for their Medicaid programs.

California was the first state to pay for the health care expenses of some adults living in the country illegally when, in 2019, state lawmakers voted to make people 25 and younger eligible for Medicaid regardless of their immigration status.

That policy took effect in 2020, right when the COVID-19 pandemic started. The federal government issued a public health emergency, meaning no one could lose their Medicaid benefits. That's why lots of young immigrants in California have been able to stay on Medicaid, even though they are now older than 25 and are technically no longer eligible.

The federal public health emergency is expected to end soon. When it does, all of those young adults who are now older than 25 would lose their benefits once they came up for renewal. Instead, the Newsom administration said it would delay those renewals until the end of 2023, giving them time for the new law to take effect.

"Protecting these young adults—who currently have Medi-Cal—from losing coverage, only to become eligible again shortly thereafter, will prevent needless gaps in health care services and medication that people need," said Connie Choi, policy director at the California Immigrant Policy Center.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 CDC: life expectancy dropped in every state</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Health/life-expectancy-dropped-2020-us-state-due-covid/story?id=88698742">https://abcnews.go.com/Health/life-expectancy-dropped-2020-us-state-due-covid/story?id=88698742</a>
GIST	<p>Every state saw a decline in life expectancy during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to <a href="#">new federal data</a> published Tuesday.</p> <p>The report, from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics, looked at death data for 2020, the last year for which complete data is available.</p> <p>Results found that life expectancy declined in all 50 states and the District of Columbia from 2019 to 2020, mainly due to COVID and "unintentional injuries," such as drug overdoses, according to the report.</p> <p>States with the highest life expectancy were predominantly in the West and Northeast, while states with the lowest life expectancy tended to be in the South, CDC data found.</p> <p>For the United States overall, life expectancy at birth was 77.0 years -- a decrease of 1.8 years from the life expectancy of 78.8 years in 2020.</p> <p>When broken down by state, Hawaii had the highest life expectancy at 80.7 years while Mississippi had the lowest at 71.9 years, the report said.</p> <p>Aside from Hawaii, in the top five were Washington, Minnesota, California and Massachusetts. Meanwhile, rounding out the bottom five were West Virginia, Louisiana, Alabama and Kentucky.</p> <p>The report found that women had an overall higher life expectancy than men at 79.9 years compared to 74.2. What's more, in every state and D.C., women had a higher life expectancy than men, according to the report.</p> <p>Hawaii and Mississippi kept their respective highest and lowest ranks when it came to life expectancy for men and women.</p>

In Hawaii, men had a life expectancy of 77.6 years in 2020 and women had a life expectancy of 83.8 years. In Mississippi, men had a life expectancy of 68.6 years in comparison with the life expectancy of women at 75.2 years.

The report also looked at life expectancy after adults reached age 65, when they are considered senior citizens. Overall, in the U.S., adults were projected to live an additional 18.5 years after reaching age 65 in 2020.

Once again, the Aloha State and the Magnolia State had the highest and lowest life expectancy at 21.0 additional years and 16.1 additional years, respectively.

The report also found that life expectancy dropped in every single state from 2019 to 2020.

New York saw the biggest drop from 80.7 years to 77.7 years, and Hawaii saw the smallest drop from 80.9 years to 80.7 years.

Additionally, the report found that, generally, states in the South, as well as well-populated states like Illinois and New Jersey, had the biggest drops in life expectancy from 2019 to 2020, while states in New England and the West had the lowest declines.

"Overall, life expectancy in the United States declined by 1.8 years from 2019 to 2020, mostly due to the COVID-19 pandemic and increases in unintentional injuries (mainly drug overdose deaths)," the authors wrote.

According to a CDC report published earlier this year, COVID-19 was the third-leading cause of death in 2020, leading to more than 350,000 deaths.

Meanwhile, annual drug overdose deaths have been rising. In 2020, more than 83,500 people died from drug overdoses, a record high at the time, according to the National Safety Council.

The CDC did not immediately respond to ABC News' request for comment.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Monkeypox cases detected in all 50 states</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Health/monkeypox-now-reported-50-states/story?id=88192785">https://abcnews.go.com/Health/monkeypox-now-reported-50-states/story?id=88192785</a>
GIST	<p>Monkeypox has now been detected in all 50 states, health officials revealed.</p> <p>Wyoming became the final state to report a case of the disease on Monday.</p> <p>The Wyoming Department of Health announced the case in an adult male in Laramie County, which includes the capital of Cheyenne.</p> <p>Public health representatives are currently working with the positive individual, to see if additional residents are at higher risk of contracting monkeypox, because of potential direct contact.</p> <p>"Because monkeypox spreads through close, intimate contact we do not believe the risk for the virus is now a higher concern for the local community or for most people in Wyoming," Wyoming Health Department state health officer and state epidemiologist Dr. Alexia Harrist said in a statement. said. "Monkeypox does not spread easily like familiar viruses such as influenza or COVID-19."</p> <p>Since the first case was announced in a Massachusetts patient in mid-May, more than 14,100 infections have been reported across the country as of Monday, CDC data shows.</p> <p>New York currently has the most infections with more than 2,700, followed by California, Florida, Texas and Georgia, respectively, CDC data shows.</p>



Over the last month, the daily number of reported cases has increased exponentially from 97 per day one month ago to more than 1,300 per day as of Aug. 10, according to the federal health agency.

Most of the cases in this outbreak have occurred during intimate skin-to-skin contact among men who have sex with men, a group that includes people who identify as gay, bisexual, transgender and nonbinary.

However, the CDC has stressed there is no evidence monkeypox is a sexually transmitted disease and that anyone can be infected through close prolonged contact.

At least five pediatric cases have been reported and at least one case has been reported among a pregnant woman.

While it is also possible to be infected with monkeypox by touching the clothes, sheets or towels of an infected patient or from prolonged face-to-face contact through respiratory droplets, the CDC says most documented transmission has not occurred from either of these two methods.

Two weeks ago, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared the outbreak to be a public health emergency, which officials stated will help with the distribution of treatments and vaccines.

Public health officials urge anyone exposed to monkeypox or thinks that they have been exposed to receive the Jynneos vaccine, which is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for both smallpox and monkeypox.

As of Aug. 9, more than 620,000 vaccine doses have been shipped and an additional 1.1 million are available to order, according to the HHS.

The CDC says the best way to lower one's risk of infection is to limit skin-to-skin contact with people whose monkeypox status is unknown, wipe down "high-touch surfaces" their skin may touch and for people to avoid touching their skin or eyes with their hands after coming into contact with a shared surface.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Haiti: protestors demand ouster of PM</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/haitians-launch-protests-demand-ouster-prime-minister-88704327">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/haitians-launch-protests-demand-ouster-prime-minister-88704327</a>
GIST	<p>PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- Thousands of protestors in Haiti's capital and other major cities blocked roads, shut down businesses and marched through the streets Monday to demand that Prime Minister Ariel Henry step down and to call for a better quality of life.</p> <p>Associated Press journalists observed an unidentified man fatally shoot a demonstrator in Port-au-Prince and then flee in a car as the crowd temporarily scattered.</p> <p>Demonstrator Lionel Jean-Pierre, who witnessed the shooting, said things in Haiti have gotten out of control.</p> <p>"Families don't know what to do," he said as the crowd around him chanted: "If Ariel doesn't leave, we're going to die!"</p> <p>Violence and kidnappings have surged in Port-au-Prince and nearby areas in recent months, with warring gangs killing hundreds of civilians in their fight over territory. They have grown more powerful since last year's assassination of President Jovenel Moïse.</p>

	<p>In one of the most recent killings denounced by the prime minister and Haiti's Office of Citizen Protection, suspected gang members killed eight people over the weekend in one community, including a mother and her two daughters who were set on fire while still alive.</p> <p>“This collective crime adds to the list of victims...that has reached an alarming proportion,” the office said.</p> <p>Poverty also has deepened, with inflation reaching 29% and some prices of some basic goods such as rice more than quadrupling. Gasoline also remains scarce and, if available, costs \$15 a gallon.</p> <p>“I need the gas to work,” 28-year-old moto-taxi driver Garry Larose said as he marched. “I have a family to feed, school to pay.”</p> <p>In one protest, people wore black T-shirts, while at another they wore red T-shirts emblazoned with the words, “RISE UP.”</p> <p>The protests come days after dozens of demonstrators staged a sit-in in front of Henry’s official residence and demanded that he resign.</p> <p>On Monday, police clashed with demonstrators in some areas, firing tear gas to break up the crowd as burning tires blocked roads.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Yemeni UAE forces seize southern oil fields</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/yemen-officials-uae-backed-forces-southern-oil-fields-88688966">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/yemen-officials-uae-backed-forces-southern-oil-fields-88688966</a>
GIST	<p>SANAA, Yemen -- Yemeni forces backed by the United Arab Emirates seized control of vital southern oil and gas fields after nearly a week of fierce clashes with their rivals, loyal to the internationally recognized government, officials and tribal leaders said Monday.</p> <p>The clashes pitted the UAE-backed Giants Brigades and Shabwa Defense Forces on one side and the paramilitary police known as the Special Security Forces on the other.</p> <p>They erupted earlier this month when Shabwa police and military commanders were sacked over alleged anti-Emirati sentiments and ties to the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood group. The internationally recognized government endorsed the move.</p> <p>The seizure of the oil fields is likely to consolidate the grip of southern, UAE-backed forces who seek to reestablish their own country in Yemen’s southern half. It also could weaken the broader alliance in Yemen that has been fighting against the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels.</p> <p>The Emirati-backed militias also took Shabwa’s provincial capital of Ataq, a few days ago, security and oil officials said. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to reporters.</p> <p>The Giants Brigades and Shabwa Defense Forces are part of the Southern Transitional Council, on-the-ground allies of the UAE, another pillar of a Saudi-led military coalition fighting the Houthis since 2015.</p> <p>The council, which virtually controls most of Yemen’s southern half, has repeatedly pushed to again split the country into two like it was from 1967 to 1990.</p> <p>Yemen’s civil war erupted in 2014, when the Houthis descended from their northern enclave and took over the capital, Sanaa, forcing the government to flee to the country’s and eventually into exile in Saudi Arabia.</p>

	<p>A Saudi-led coalition — then backed by the United States — entered the war in early 2015 to try to restore the government to power. Since then, the conflict has turned into a proxy war between regional foes Saudi Arabia and Iran, which backs the Houthis.</p> <p>The war has also split Yemen along tribal, regional and political lines.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Putin reinstates Stalin-era decree</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/putin-revives-soviet-era-title-mothers-heroine/story?id=88691265">https://abcnews.go.com/International/putin-revives-soviet-era-title-mothers-heroine/story?id=88691265</a>
GIST	<p>Russian President Vladimir Putin recently reinstated a Soviet-era award, giving women who have ten or more children a single payment of a million rubles (worth \$16,747 USD, as of publishing).</p> <p>The honorary title and certification of "Mother Heroine" are given to the mother once their tenth living child turns 1 year old.</p> <p>According to Putin's decree, mothers will still be eligible for the award if their child dies as a result of war or from an act of terrorism, or in an emergency situation.</p> <p>The Mother Heroine award was initially <a href="#">established by Josef Stalin</a> in 1944 to encourage repopulation in wake of the country's high casualty count from World War II. At the time, the award was described as a "badge of special distinction" but was stopped in 1991 alongside the fall of the Soviet Union.</p> <p>With an average household size of 3.2 people, Russia's population has been declining at a rapid rate over the past 30 years, as <a href="#">reported by Statista</a>.</p> <p>Recent estimates state that between January and May of 2022, the population of the Russian Federation fell by over 430,000 people, 20% being those who have left the country, <a href="#">according to the Russian statistics agency Rosstat</a>.</p> <p>Though Russian authorities do not provide an official toll for the number of citizens who have been killed in the <a href="#">war in Ukraine</a>, 5,256 deaths are estimated, according to <a href="#">independent news outlet, istories</a>.</p> <p>According to the data department of the Russian Database on Fertility and Mortality, the death rate of young people in Russia has increased by 18% due to war.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Dallas emergency: 1-in-a-1,000yr flood</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/months-worth-rain-pounds-dallas-area-overnight-flash/story?id=88688014">https://abcnews.go.com/US/months-worth-rain-pounds-dallas-area-overnight-flash/story?id=88688014</a>
GIST	<p>Officials have announced one fatality after three months' worth of rain pounded the Dallas area overnight.</p> <p>A 60-year-old woman was killed when her vehicle was swept away by flood waters, Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins announced on Twitter Monday afternoon.</p> <p>Eastern Dallas saw a whopping 15.16 inches of rainfall -- a one-in-a-thousand-year flood.</p> <p>During an average summer, Dallas sees a total of 8 inches of rain.</p> <p>Clay did not release the woman's identity.</p> <p>A body was pulled from a vehicle near the Scyene Road Bridge in Mesquite, Texas, about 15 miles east of Dallas, ABC Dallas affiliate WFAA reported. The car was discovered as the water receded, city officials said.</p> <p>At one point overnight, the rainfall rate climbed to 3 inches per hour, forcing drivers to abandon their cars on roads.</p>

	<p>The Fort Worth Fire Department said it responded to 133 high water calls. Dallas Fire-Rescue said it responded to 186 high water incidents and 314 car crashes.</p> <p>Jenkins declared a state of disaster in the county Monday night.</p> <p>"Based on preliminary damage assessments, I am declaring a state of disaster in Dallas County and requesting state and federal assistance for affected individuals," Jenkins tweeted.</p> <p>This comes after the Dallas area faced an exceptional drought, the highest category assigned by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.</p> <p>The rain is now shifting east and will reach eastern Texas, northern Louisiana and central Mississippi by Monday evening.</p> <p>Louisiana and Mississippi are forecast to get hit with 6 inches of rain in just one or two days, which could cause flooding Tuesday and Wednesday.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 SPD backlog public record requests: 2,800+</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.axios.com/local/seattle/2022/08/22/seattle-police-open-record-requests-backlog-2800?utm_source=newsletter&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=newsletter_axioslocal_seattle&amp;stream=top">https://www.axios.com/local/seattle/2022/08/22/seattle-police-open-record-requests-backlog-2800?utm_source=newsletter&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=newsletter_axioslocal_seattle&amp;stream=top</a>
GIST	<p>The Seattle Police Department's slow responses to public records requests persist, with the agency now taking months — sometimes longer — to turn over records that could shine a light on its inner-workings.</p> <p><b>Yes, but:</b> An SPD spokesperson told Axios the department's responses have improved since last year — down from an average of 87 days to 79 days to close requests.</p> <p><b>Why it matters:</b> Washington's Public Records Act <a href="#">requires government agencies provide "prompt responses"</a> to records requests under the law that <a href="#">guarantees</a> citizens "do not give their public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know."</p> <p><b>State of play:</b> SPD's <a href="#">public records portal</a> still greets requesters with a boilerplate notice citing Gov. Jay Inslee's since-rescinded pandemic emergency order, warning prospective requesters of the potential for a "slower than anticipated response."</p> <p><b>The latest:</b> As of last Thursday, SPD said it received 7,667 requests this year and closed out 5,765 of them, leaving a current backlog of more than 2,800 open requests.</p> <p><b>What they're saying:</b> "We think there is a serious, systemic problem in the city of Seattle in terms of its transparency," Michael Fancher, president of the Washington Coalition for Open Government, told Axios.</p> <p><b>The other side:</b> "We would love to be faster and more responsive (to requesters) ... but that just has not been in the cards according to budget," SPD spokesperson Detective Valerie Carson told Axios.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPD receives more than half of all records requests submitted citywide, per the mayor's office.</li> <li>• The volume combined with new complexities — including multiple new digital data sources holding records — requires more time and expertise to respond to seemingly simple requests, Carson said.</li> </ul> <p><b>Zoom out:</b> SPD received funding to add four public disclosure officers and one technical support employee since last year, bringing the number of employees devoted to records requests to 18, Carson said.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A proposal to fund another tech worker devoted to email searches wasn't approved last year, however.</li> </ul>

**Lewis here:** Since I joined Axios in March, SPD has yet to provide a single document in response to any of five records requests I've submitted. That includes a request for a two-page email made in May.

- I also had multiple outstanding requests with SPD — including several still open after more than a year — when I left The Seattle Times.

**Context:** This problem is not new.

Last year, SPD — which owns the biggest budget of any city department at \$363 million — [cited staff and funding shortages for rampant delays](#) as it warned that requests could take 6–12 months to fulfill.

**Background:** SPD's laggardness in responding to requests persists at a time when a host of key issues face the department — from widespread scrutiny of budget practices and ongoing police reforms, to a looming decision for hiring a permanent police chief.

- It also comes on the heels of several high-profile public records snafus in the city, including a [deleted text messages scandal](#) now [under investigation](#).
- Aside from a lack of transparency, such problems also cost taxpayers big, including [a \\$200,000 settlement](#) with the Times in which the city agreed not to withhold records unnecessarily.

**Meanwhile,** council member Lisa Herbold, who told Axios she has pushed to increase SPD staffing for handling requests, said she's "hopeful and eager" to work with Mayor Bruce Harrell to ensure the additional staffer devoted to email searches is included in his forthcoming budget plan.

- A spokesperson for Harrell's office told Axios in an email the city now spends more than \$14 million and employs 70+ workers in over 38 city departments to handle the 15,000–16,000 requests received annually.
- Harrell "supports continued efforts to improve SPD fulfillment times," the spokesperson added.

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## Cyber, Tech Awareness

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HEADLINE	08/23 Charming Kitten APT new data theft tool
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.darkreading.com/endpoint/charming-kitten-apt-wields-new-scrapers-to-steal-email-inboxes">https://www.darkreading.com/endpoint/charming-kitten-apt-wields-new-scrapers-to-steal-email-inboxes</a>
GIST	<p>Iranian advanced persistent threat (APT) group <a href="#">Charming Kitten</a> has a new data-scraping tool in its arsenal that claws emails from victim Gmail, Yahoo!, and Microsoft Outlook accounts using previously acquired credentials, Google researchers have found.</p> <p>A team from Google Threat Analysis Group (TAG) discovered the tool, dubbed HYPERSCRAPE, last December and has been tracking it since then, it revealed in <a href="#">a blog post published Tuesday</a>.</p> <p>The attacker poses as a legitimate user by either by initiating an authenticated user session that's been hijacked or via stolen credentials, and then runs the scraper to download victims' inboxes, TAG's Ajax Bash wrote in Google's post.</p> <p>"It spoofs the user agent to look like an outdated browser, which enables the basic HTML view in Gmail" by resulting in an error message, he said.</p> <p>If the attacker can't access the account this way, the tool displays a login page for manually entering credentials to proceed, with HYPERSCRAPE waiting until it finds the victim's inbox page, Bash wrote.</p> <p>HYPERSCRAPE appears to have been around since 2020, when its first samples were spotted. Charming Kitten -- aka Phosphorous and myriad other names -- continues to actively develop the tool. Attacks so far have been limited to less than two dozen accounts located in Iran, the researchers said.</p> <p>Modus Operandi</p>

Once logged in, HYPERSCRAPE changes the account's language settings to English and goes through the contents of the mailbox, individually downloading messages as .eml files and marking them unread, Bash explained.

After downloading messages from the inbox, the tool reverts the language back to its original settings and deletes any security emails from Google. The tool is written in .NET for targeting Windows PCs and is designed to run on the attacker's machine, he said.

Early versions of HYPERSCRAPE included an option for actors to request data from Google Takeout, a feature that allows users to export their data to a downloadable archive file.

This feature would spawn a new copy of the tool and initialize a pipe communication channel to relay the cookies and account name, both of which are required to accomplish the export. Once received, the browser would navigate to the official Takeout link to request and eventually download the exfiltrated data.

The Takeout feature was never automated in the tool, however, and researchers said they're not clear on why it was removed.

Google's researchers tested HYPERSCRAPE specifically with a Gmail account, noting that functionality may differ for Yahoo! or Microsoft email apps when under attack. Moreover, HYPERSCRAPE won't run unless in a directory with other file dependencies, they explained.

#### Furthering Objectives

Charming Kitten is [a prolific APT](#) believed to be backed by government of Iran and known by a number of other names – including TA453, APT35, Ajax Security Team, NewsBeef, Newscaster, and the aforementioned Phosphorus.

The group – which first rose to prominence in 2018 – has been extremely active in the last several years and is best known for targeted cyber espionage attacks against politicians, journalists, human-rights activists, researchers, scholars, and think tanks.

Some of the APT's more high-profile attacks occurred in 2020, when the group targeted the Trump and Biden presidential campaigns as well as attendees of two global geo-political summits, the Munich Security Conference and the Think 20 (T20) Summit, in separate and various incidents.

While HYPERSCRAPE doesn't showcase anything groundbreaking as far as novel malware goes, it does show Charming Kitten's commitment to developing custom capabilities dedicated to a particular purpose, Bash noted.

"Like much of their tooling, HYPERSCRAPE is not notable for its technical sophistication, but rather its effectiveness in accomplishing Charming Kitten's objectives," he wrote.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Greek gas operator refuses to negotiate</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://therecord.media/greek-gas-operator-refuses-to-negotiate-with-ransomware-group-after-attack/">https://therecord.media/greek-gas-operator-refuses-to-negotiate-with-ransomware-group-after-attack/</a>
GIST	<p>Greece's national natural gas operator DESFA <a href="#">confirmed</a> this weekend that it was hit with a cyberattack but said it will not negotiate with the people behind the incident.</p> <p>DESFA is in charge of managing, exploiting, developing, and operating Greece's natural gas system.</p> <p>The Ragnar Locker ransomware group added the organization to its leak site on Friday, writing that no one had responded to its demands.</p>



On Saturday, DESFA confirmed that its IT infrastructure was hit with a cyberattack and that it had a “confirmed impact on the availability of some systems and possible leakage of a number of directories and files.”

“We have managed to ensure and continue the operation of the National Natural Gas System (NNGS) in a safe and reliable way. The management of the NNGS continues to operate smoothly and DESFA continues to supply natural gas to all entry and exit points of the country safely and adequately,” the company said in a statement.

“DESFA remains firm in its position not to negotiate with cybercriminals.”

The root cause of the attack is being investigated, and the organization has hired technical experts to help with the response and recovery.

DESFA deactivated most of its IT services after the attack was discovered and is slowly turning everything back on. The company did not respond to requests for comment on Monday.

Greek law enforcement agencies as well as the Ministry of Digital Governance and Hellenic Data Protection Authority have been notified of the attack.

In March, Greece’s national postal service ELTA struggled to recover from a ransomware attack that forced it to suspend the commercial information systems [of all 1,400 post offices](#) for days.

There has been increased concern among government officials and experts about ransomware groups targeting the operational networks of critical infrastructure organizations across the world.

Nearly 40% of all ransomware attacks on industrial organizations and infrastructure in the second quarter of 2022 took place in Europe, according to [a recent Dragos report](#).

Last week, South Staffordshire PLC, the supplier of water to about 1.6 million people in the South Staffordshire and Cambridge regions in the U.K., [was attacked by a ransomware group](#).

For the third quarter of 2022, Dragos said it expected ransomware groups to continue targeting industrial operations, either “through the integration of OT [operational technology] kill processes into ransomware strains, flattened networks allowing for ransomware to spread into OT environments, or through precautionary shutdowns of OT environments by operators to prevent ransomware from spreading to OT systems.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Counterfeit phones target WhatsApp</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://thehackernews.com/2022/08/researchers-find-counterfeit-phones.html">https://thehackernews.com/2022/08/researchers-find-counterfeit-phones.html</a>
GIST	<p>Budget Android device models that are counterfeit versions associated with popular smartphone brands are harboring multiple trojans designed to target WhatsApp and WhatsApp Business messaging apps.</p> <p>The malware, which Doctor Web first came across in July 2022, were discovered in the system partition of at least four different smartphones: P48pro, radmi note 8, Note30u, and Mate40, was</p> <p>"These incidents are united by the fact that the attacked devices were copycats of famous brand-name models," the cybersecurity firm <a href="#">said</a> in a report published today.</p> <p>"Moreover, instead of having one of the latest OS versions installed on them with the corresponding information displayed in the device details (for example, Android 10), they had the long outdated 4.4.2 version."</p>

Specifically, the tampering concerns two files "/system/lib/libcutils.so" and "/system/lib/libmtd.so" that are modified in such a manner that when the libcutils.so system library is used by any app, it [triggers](#) the execution of a trojan incorporated in libmtd.so.

If the apps using the libraries are WhatsApp and WhatsApp Business, libmtd.so proceeds to [launch](#) a third backdoor whose main [responsibility](#) is to download and install additional plugins from a remote server onto the compromised devices.

"The danger of the discovered backdoors and the modules they download is that they operate in such a way that they actually become part of the targeted apps," the researchers said.

"As a result, they gain access to the attacked apps' files and can read chats, send spam, intercept and listen to phone calls, and execute other malicious actions, depending on the functionality of the downloaded modules."

On the other hand, should the app using the libraries turn out to be [wpa\\_supplicant](#) – a [system daemon](#) that's used to manage network connections – libmtd.so is configured to start a local server which allows connections from a remote or local client via the "mysh" console.

Doctor Web theorized the system partition implants could be part of the [FakeUpdates](#) (aka [SocGholish](#)) malware family based on the discovery of another trojan embedded into the system application responsible for over-the-air (OTA) firmware updates.

The rogue app, for its part, is [engineered](#) to exfiltrate detailed metadata about the infected device as well as download and install other software without users' knowledge via Lua scripts.

To avoid the risk of becoming a victim of such malware attacks, it's recommended that users purchase mobile devices only from official stores and legitimate distributors.

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HEADLINE	08/22 CISA: PAN-OS DDoS flaw in attacks
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/cisa-is-warning-of-high-severity-pan-os-ddos-flaw-used-in-attacks/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/cisa-is-warning-of-high-severity-pan-os-ddos-flaw-used-in-attacks/</a>
GIST	<p>A recent vulnerability found in Palo Alto Networks' PAN-OS has been added to the catalog of Known Exploitable Vulnerabilities from the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA).</p> <p>The security issue is a high-severity risk identified as CVE-2022-0028 that allows a remote threat actor to deploy reflected and amplified denial-of-service (DoS) attacks without having to authenticate.</p> <p><b>Certain conditions apply</b></p> <p>Several PAN-OS versions powering PA-Series, VM-Series, and CN-Series devices are vulnerable to CVE-2022-0028 and Palo Alto Networks has released patches for all of them.</p> <p>While exploiting the flaw can only cause a DoS condition on the affected device, it has already been used for at least one attack.</p> <p>In a security advisory on August 12, <a href="#">Palo Alto Networks says</a> that they became aware of the issue after receiving an alert about an attempted reflected denial-of-service (RDoS) attack through one of its products.</p> <p>According to the vendor, a threat actor exploiting the issue could hide their original IP address, making remediation a more difficult task.</p> <p>CISA is warning federal agencies that they should apply available fixes by September 9 and is using the following summary to describe it:</p>

	<p>A Palo Alto Networks PAN-OS URL filtering policy misconfiguration could allow a network-based attacker to conduct reflected and amplified TCP denial-of-service (RDoS) attacks.</p> <p>Palo Alto Networks that CVE-2022-0028 is exploitable only under certain conditions, which are not part of a common firewall configuration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The security policy on the firewall that allows traffic to pass from Zone A to Zone B includes a URL filtering profile with one or more blocked categories</li> <li>• Packet-based attack protection is not enabled in a Zone Protection profile for Zone A, including both (Packet Based Attack Protection &gt; TCP Drop &gt; TCP Syn With Data) and (Packet Based Attack Protection &gt; TCP Drop &gt; Strip TCP Options &gt; TCP Fast Open)</li> <li>• Flood protection through SYN cookies is not enabled in a Zone Protection profile for Zone A (Flood Protection &gt; SYN &gt; Action &gt; SYN Cookie) with an activation threshold of 0 connections</li> </ul> <p>If organizations with vulnerable devices cannot apply the most recent updates immediately, they can use the following <a href="#">guide from the vendor</a> as a workaround until fixes can be installed.</p> <p>The current catalog of <a href="#">Known Exploitable Vulnerabilities</a> from CISA lists 802 security issues that organizations around the world could use to improve their defenses.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Fake DDoS protection alerts push RAT</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.darkreading.com/attacks-breaches/threat-actors-using-fake-ddos-protection-alerts-to-distribute-dangerous-rat">https://www.darkreading.com/attacks-breaches/threat-actors-using-fake-ddos-protection-alerts-to-distribute-dangerous-rat</a>
GIST	<p>Threat actors are spoofing Cloudflare DDoS bot-checks in an attempt to drop a remote-access Trojan (RAT) on systems belonging to visitors to some previously compromised WordPress websites.</p> <p>Researchers from Sucuri recently spotted the new attack vector while investigating a <a href="#">surge in JavaScript injection attacks targeting WordPress</a> sites. They observed the attackers injecting a script into the WordPress websites that triggered a fake prompt claiming to be the website verifying if a site visitor is human or a DDoS bot.</p> <p>Many Web application firewalls (WAFs) and content distribution network services routinely serve up such alerts as part of their DDoS protection service. Sucuri observed this new JavaScript on WordPress sites triggering a fake Cloudflare DDoS protection pop-up.</p> <p>Users who clicked on the fake prompt to access the website ended up with a malicious .iso file downloaded onto their systems. They then received a new message asking them to open the file so they can receive a verification code for accessing the website. "Since these types of browser checks are so common on the web many users wouldn't think twice before clicking this prompt to access the website they're trying to visit," Sucuri wrote. "What most users do not realize is that this file is in fact a remote access trojan, currently flagged by 13 security vendors at the time of this post."</p> <p><b>Dangerous RAT</b></p> <p>Sucuri identified the remote-access Trojan as NetSupport RAT, a malware tool that ransomware actors have previously used to footprint systems before delivering ransomware on them. The RAT has also been used to drop Racoon Stealer, a well-known information stealer that briefly dropped out of sight earlier this year before <a href="#">surging back on the threat landscape</a> in June. Racoon Stealer surfaced in 2019 and was one of the most prolific information stealers of 2021. Threat actors have distributed it in a variety of ways, including malware-as-a-service models and by planting it on websites selling pirated software. With the fake Cloudflare DDoS protection prompts, threat actors now have a new way of distributing the malware.</p> <p>"Threat actors, particularly when phishing, will use anything that looks legitimate to fool users," says John Bambenek, principal threat hunter at Netenrich. As people get used to mechanisms like Captcha's for detecting and blocking bots, it makes sense for threat actors to use those same mechanisms to try to fool users, he says. "This not only can be used to get people to install malware, but could be used for 'credential</p>

	<p>checks' to steal credentials of major cloud services (such as) Google, Microsoft, and Facebook," Bambenek says.</p> <p>Ultimately, website operators need a way to tell the difference between a real user and a synthetic one, or a bot, he notes. But often the more effective the tools for detecting bots get, the harder they get for users to decode, Bambenek adds.</p> <p>Charles Conley, senior cyber security researcher at nVisium, says that using content spoofing of the kind that Sucuri observed to deliver a RAT is not especially new. Cybercriminals have routinely spoofed business-related apps and services from companies such as Microsoft, Zoom, and DocuSign to deliver malware and trick users into executing all kinds of unsafe software and actions.</p> <p>However, with browser-based spoofing attacks, default settings on browsers such as Chrome that hide the full URL or operating systems like Windows that hide file extensions can make it harder for even discerning individuals to tell what they're downloading and where it's from, Conley says.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 New BianLian ransomware variant on rise</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.darkreading.com/cloud/new-bianlian-ransomware-variant-on-the-rise">https://www.darkreading.com/cloud/new-bianlian-ransomware-variant-on-the-rise</a>
GIST	<p>Cybercriminals are swarming to deploy an emerging ransomware variant called BianLian that was written in Go, the Google-created open source programming language.</p> <p>BianLian has been rising popularity since it was first outed in mid-July, according to researchers at Cyble Research Labs, which published details on their study of the ransomware <a href="#">in a blog post</a> last week. Threat actors so far have cast a wide net with the novel BianLian malware, which counts organizations in media and entertainment; manufacturing; education; healthcare; and banking, financial services, and insurance (BFSI) among its victims so far.</p> <p>Specifically, the media and entertainment sector has taken the brunt of BianLian attacks, with 25% of victims in this industry so far, and 12.5% each in the professional services, manufacturing, healthcare, energy and utilities, and education sectors, according to Cyble.</p> <p>Attackers using BianLian typically demand unusually high ransoms, and they utilize a unique encryption style that divides the file content into chunks of 10 bytes to evade detection by antivirus products, the researchers said. "First, it reads 10 bytes from the original file, then encrypts the bytes and writes the encrypted data into the target file," the Cybel researchers wrote in the post.</p> <p>BianLian's operators also use double-extortion methods, threatening to leak key stolen data — such as financial, client, business, technical, and personal files — online if ransom demands aren't met within 10 days. They maintain an onion leak site for this purpose.</p> <p><b>How the Ransomware Variant Works</b></p> <p>BianLian functions similarly to other ransomware types in that it encrypts files once it infects a targeted system and sends a ransomware note to its victims letting them know how to contact the operators.</p> <p>Upon execution of the ransomware, BianLian attempts to identify if the file is running in a WINE environment by checking the <code>wine_get_version()</code> function via the <code>GetProcAddress()</code> API, the researchers said. Then, the ransomware creates multiple threads using the <code>CreateThread()</code> API function to perform faster file encryption, which also makes reverse engineering the malware more difficult, they said.</p> <p>The malware then identifies the system drives (from A:\ to Z:\) using the <code>GetDriveTypeW()</code> API function and encrypts any files available in the connected drives before dropping its ransomware note, the researchers said.</p>

	<p>BianLian also is notable in that uses Go as its foundational language, giving threat actors more flexibility in both developing and deploying the malware, the researchers said. "We have seen many threats developed using the Go language, such as Ransomware, RAT, <a href="#">Stealer</a>, etc.," they wrote.</p> <p>Go's cross-platform capability enables a single codebase to be compiled into all major operating systems. This makes it easy for threat actors — such as the ones behind BianLian — to make constant changes and add new capabilities to a malware to avoid detection, the researchers said.</p> <p>Other cyber threats written in the so-called GoLang that have been active in the past year include a botnet called Kraken that recently resurfaced, as well as Blackrota, a heavily obfuscated backdoor.</p> <p>While increased efforts by international law enforcement to crack down on the actors behind <a href="#">major cybercriminal groups</a> has had some impact on ransomware, <a href="#">new threat operators</a> and <a href="#">ransomware variants</a> have perennially risen to replace now-defunct ones.</p> <p>Cyble reiterated in its blog post some best practices for ransomware defense: running regular, offline backups; keeping device software updated, ideally using automatic software updates; running anti-malware software on devices; and avoiding opening any suspicious or unknown links and attachments.</p>
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## Terrorism, Extremism

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Iran Guards general killed in Syria</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.thedefensepost.com/2022/08/23/iran-guards-general-killed-syria/">https://www.thedefensepost.com/2022/08/23/iran-guards-general-killed-syria/</a>
GIST	<p>A general of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has been killed while "on a mission" in Syria, Iranian state media reported on Tuesday.</p> <p>"General <b>Abolfazl Alijani</b>, a member of the IRGC's ground forces who was on a mission in Syria as a military adviser, was martyred on Sunday," the state broadcaster said on its website.</p> <p>It described Alijani as a "defender of the sanctuary," a term used for those who work on behalf of Iran in Syria or Iraq, without providing more details of the attack in which he was killed.</p> <p>Iran says it has deployed its forces in Syria at the invitation of Damascus and only as advisers.</p> <p>In early August, funeral processions were held in Tehran and other Iranian cities for five IRGC members killed in Syria several years ago, after their bodies were recovered and identified through DNA testing, Iranian media reported.</p> <p>Back in March, the Guards said that an Israeli attack in Syria killed two of its officers, warning that Israel "will pay for the crime."</p> <p><a href="#">Israel has carried out hundreds of air strikes inside Syria</a> in recent years, targeting government positions as well as allied Iran-backed forces and fighters of Lebanese Shiite militant group Hezbollah.</p> <p>While Israel rarely comments on individual strikes, it has acknowledged mounting hundreds of them since 2011.</p> <p>The Israeli military has defended them as necessary to prevent its arch-foe Iran from gaining a foothold on its doorstep.</p> <p><a href="#">Iran and Israel have been engaged in a years-long shadow war</a>, with the Islamic republic accusing its "sworn-enemy" of carrying out sabotage attacks against its nuclear sites and assassinations of key figures, including scientists.</p>

	The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps is the ideological arm of the Iranian military and is <a href="#">blacklisted as a terrorist group by the United States</a> .
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Mozambique rebels launch new offensive</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/world/mozambiques-jihadi-rebels-launch-new-offensive-in-north/">https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/world/mozambiques-jihadi-rebels-launch-new-offensive-in-north/</a>
GIST	<p>MAPUTO, Mozambique (AP) — A new offensive by Mozambique’s Islamic extremist rebels in the embattled northern province of Cabo Delgado has increased the number of displaced by 80,000 and undermines the government’s claims of containing the insurgency.</p> <p>The rebels have expanded their area in a campaign that has lasted for more than two months. The new offensive, which started in June, follows a period of relative calm when the commander-general of Mozambique’s national police had declared that “the war against terrorism is almost at an end.”</p> <p>That claim proved to be hollow as the fighters have struck further south than ever before, burning villages and beheading civilians in the Ancuabe, Chiure and Mecufi districts which had previously been untouched by the conflict since it began in October 2017.</p> <p>The latest bout of violence brings the total number of people displaced in Cabo Delgado to just under 950,000, according to estimates by the International Organization for Migration.</p> <p>Despite the military support that Mozambique is receiving from troops sent by neighboring countries and Rwanda, the rebels are far from defeated. The foreign troops were deployed in Cabo Delgado a year ago, following the extremists’ seizure of the strategic town of Palma in March, 2021.</p> <p>“The prevalence of attacks a year after the beginning of the foreign military intervention confirms what was already clear” that the government is wrong to say the insurrection has been caused by an external invasion with obscure interests, said Albino Forquilha, executive director of FOMICRES, an independent peacebuilding organization in Mozambique.</p> <p>“The truth is that the conflict has internal origins due to bad governance and a poor relationship between the state and the local population,” Forquilha continued. “As long as the government ignores this fact, the attacks will not stop.”</p> <p>Mozambique’s security forces and the allied foreign troops have succeeded in driving insurgents from the main towns of Cabo Delgado into the forests, but this has effectively put rural civilians on the frontline. Since June, the insurgency has been characterized by relentless hit-and-run assaults on undefended villages, forcing the military and police off-balance as they rush to respond from one incident to the next.</p> <p>“In the context of logistical limitations, whether due to the number of soldiers or military equipment, the increase in the number of attacks across dispersed areas will limit the pursuit of armed groups by government forces and their partners,” said João Feijó, a researcher at the Mozambique-based Observatory of the Rural Environment. “It is a strategy that aims to increase the difficulties for government forces and their partners, and they need to devise an adequate response to this.”</p> <p>The 16-nation Southern African Development Community is due to decide in August whether to further extend its military intervention, which originally had a mandate for three months, beginning in July 2021.</p> <p>The experience of the last year suggests that more than just military force is needed to bring the insurgency to heel, say analysts.</p>



	<p>“I do not see a quick end to these attacks,” said Forquilha. “Even if the military intervention had managed to expel the insurgents, I don’t doubt that dissatisfaction would continue in the minds of the youth. Because the problem here is not destroying insurgent bases, it is getting young people to identify with the state.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Afghan allies still wait US rescue year later</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/22/tens-thousands-afghan-allies-still-waiting-us-resc/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/22/tens-thousands-afghan-allies-still-waiting-us-resc/</a>
GIST	<p>A year after the U.S. left him behind in Afghanistan, Will cannot understand what happened.</p> <p>He served at Camp Shouz in the country’s western Herat province, working as an interpreter for U.S. troops and contractors as they negotiated with village elders and worked to train Afghan police recruits.</p> <p>Will, a pseudonym The Washington Times is using to protect his identity, has glowing recommendations from a U.S. Army major who called him “one of my most trusted interpreters.” Yet Will is stuck in a bureaucratic battle with the State Department, which told him his file isn’t complete and he can’t come to the U.S. for now.</p> <p>He says he is still in danger and cannot believe it’s been a year since the Islamist Taliban insurgency took over and the Biden administration has failed to rescue him.</p> <p>“All I can say is we counted on [the] U.S. but it’s betrayed us, left us here,” he told The Times in an email exchange.</p> <p>Others have been luckier.</p> <p>Muhammad, who six months ago was in the same situation as Will — stuck inside Afghanistan and begging for a way out — told The Times that the State Department arranged for him to hop aboard a flight to Qatar in June. He will be flown to the U.S. soon to complete his case.</p> <p>“I am lucky and very happy that finally I got safe with my family,” he said.</p> <p>The U.S. ended its massive airlift operation out of Kabul on Aug. 31 last year. Although some are like Muhammad, far more are like Will: genuine Afghan-born allies of the U.S.-led war effort who assisted American forces and were promised a pathway to the U.S. through what is known as the Special Immigrant Visa, but who now cannot get out of a country controlled by the enemy they fought.</p> <p>“People are dying, they’ve lost their fortunes, their livelihood. Some people have just been despondent and have given up on the process,” said Perry Blackburn, a former Army officer who founded AFGfree.org, which is working to support thousands of those left behind. “It’s easier to get into the U.S. if you do it illegally than if you want to do it legally.”</p> <p>The U.S. employed tens of thousands of Afghan nationals during its 20-year military engagement in their country, using them as translators, guides and service and support personnel at local bases. Those who served for at least a year, have the recommendation of a supervisor, and who can show they have faced threats because of their assistance qualify for consideration for an SIV.</p> <p>The U.S. brought roughly 77,000 Afghans to the U.S. during last year’s airlift, but only about half of those were authentic allies who were in line or potentially eligible for the special visa.</p> <p>The State Department has been reluctant to offer public estimates as to how many SIV-eligible Afghans were left behind, but outside groups say it could be as many as 160,000. Calculating an average of three family members coming with each SIV applicant, that might mean more than 500,000 Afghans are being blocked from a path to the U.S. based on their service with the American military.</p>

The State Department says 16,000 people have cleared what is known as “Chief of Mission approval,” the key step certifying they have earned the right to relocate. They still must go through a final in-person interview.

That’s where things turn tricky.

With the U.S. Embassy in Kabul shuttered, the State Department says it cannot conduct interviews inside Afghanistan for applicants. It is urging people to make their way to another country, such as Pakistan, where the U.S. does have a presence and can conduct the interviews.

Afghans say making it to Pakistan isn’t like an American crossing into Mexico or Canada. Even if they do make it, the costs of supporting themselves during the uncertain weeks or months of waiting for an interview can be prohibitive.

Private aid groups try to help by paying for apartments and food deliveries in Pakistan — just as they are doing for some of those stuck inside Afghanistan.

A two-bedroom apartment runs \$400 to \$600 a month, and food for a family of four to six comes to under \$200 a month, Mr. Blackburn said. The government isn’t paying those funds. The money is coming from donations to the groups or, in so many cases, straight out of veterans’ pockets as they try to keep friends alive.

‘Excruciatingly slow’

The pace of approvals remains excruciatingly slow. The State Department has issued fewer than 1,000 visas from January to March, which is the latest data available.

Meanwhile, nearly 2,300 Afghans had their applications deemed unqualified or approvals revoked during the same three-month period. Applications can fail because the candidate did not submit all the right documents or did not prove their full service to the U.S. war effort, or because investigators found a history of criminal or terrorist activity.

“I’m disappointed we’re still where we’re at,” Mr. Blackburn said. “I’ve been part of their webinars, and they seem to spend more time congratulating each other and patting each other on the back than working solutions to streamline the process and help these folks.”

Those stuck in Afghanistan say they’re not hearing much from the U.S. government, either in terms of their applications or guidance on where to stay safe. That is fueling desperation and resentment.

“All communication must be by email, and often it takes weeks or months to get a response unless congressional representatives get involved,” said one person involved in evacuation efforts.

One time the person needed to call the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad to work through an urgent matter on an SIV case and was told that a policy prohibited calls from being transferred to the SIV division.

“While I understood that they might otherwise be flooded with calls, the individuals answering the phones for the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan definitely did not seem to care a whit about the plight of Afghan SIV applicants,” he told The Times.

Still, he reported some successes, having helped a man and his family get across the border to Pakistan, make it to Islamabad and have an in-person interview. As of late last month, the family had turned in their passports and were awaiting a final visa stamp.

“This is what has improved, but they were also extremely far into the SIV processes,” he told The Times. “For those just now applying or not [Chief of Mission]-approved, however, it will be years before they will see any resolution at the current pace.”

Those still living inside Afghanistan face varying levels of danger. Some are in imminent peril, and others are less likely to be targets, though they are facing tough times. That, of course, is true for most of the country, with a crumpled economy, the loss of massive amounts of foreign assistance and food shortages.

Trying to streamline the process

The State Department, in response to questions from The Times, said it is working to streamline the approval process for special visa applicants. It can point to some progress in the numbers.

At the end of the Trump administration, the government averaged 703 days of processing time for each approved application, not including the time the applicants spent collecting and submitting their documents. After the chaotic and sudden fall of Kabul, the government's processing time rose to 734 days.

More staffing and some shortcuts the Biden team has imposed have cut the average wait to 587 days, according to the latest data. That's still more than a year and a half, but it's a major improvement.

For those still stuck in Afghanistan without access to an interview, however, the government's advice hasn't changed in a year's time: Find your own way out of the country.

"We're still working through the same bureaucratic processes that prevented us post-August last year of getting folks out," Mr. Blackburn said.

That's because, despite the Biden administration's assurances to the contrary amid the chaotic withdrawal, it has yet to establish a working relationship with the Taliban leadership. Washington still does not officially recognize the Taliban as the legitimate government of the country.

"Nothing about us working with the Taliban was accurate," Mr. Blackburn said. "There was not a partnership with the Taliban on the wall."

The State Department didn't say when it expects to establish a presence in-country for interviews but hopes "to continue to have a pragmatic dialogue with the Taliban."

"We are committed to supporting departures of U.S. citizens, [lawful permanent residents], Afghan allies, and their eligible family members from Afghanistan. As [Secretary of State Antony Blinken] has said, there is no expiration date on this effort," the department said.

Problems in Pakistan

Even those who make it to Pakistan face problems. The State Department demands scanned documents, such as identification cards, but, as one advocate said, "Who the hell has a scanner in Afghanistan?"

Also, life goes on, and if a refugee family has a new child — or a child or spouse dies — they have to refile an application, according to advocates working with Afghan cases in Pakistan.

Others are stuck in limbo. Some 6,500 Afghans were shipped to Emirates Humanitarian City, or EHC, run by the United Arab Emirates.

The U.S. government sent about 1,000, and nongovernmental organizations evacuated the rest.

One NGO leader involved in the effort said the State Department initially didn't acknowledge the population, then began to process some people, but there's no apparent method to how they are working the cases. People with no path to an SIV have been put onto planes and brought to the U.S., while hundreds of others with clear SIV potential "haven't been touched," the NGO leader said.

“Where we stand today in EHC is we have people with valid pathways to the United States, valid immigration cases, that are sitting in limbo, that are not being addressed,” the leader said.

Meanwhile, the UAE is putting up the displaced at its own expense, providing food and medical care and, for those who do get approved to fly out to a third country, sending them off with envelopes of cash.

The State Department declined to talk about numbers and hurdles for those stuck at EHC.

“We are working intensively across the interagency and with Embassy Abu Dhabi to develop the necessary capabilities to support processing for Afghan travelers in UAE who may be eligible for onward relocation and entry in the United States,” the department said.

As for those still in Afghanistan, if broken promises and moral obligations don’t motivate the government to move faster on some cases, questions of national security risk might.

Several sources The Times spoke with detailed the danger of having left behind so many people with intimate knowledge of U.S. military operations — including some highly trained special operations forces — who might be recruited by an enemy.

“They’ve been left there for a year, the economy’s collapsing, they’re being hunted down by the Talibs, It is not hard to imagine that some of them would be potentially ripe for some kind of coercion or co-opting,” one investigator said.

It’s an issue Rep. Michael T. McCaul of Texas, the top Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, has been pressing.

He released a report this month revealing that some of those special operations forces were among 3,000 Afghan security troops who fled across the border into Iran.

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## Suspicious, Unusual

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HEADLINE	08/23 August hurricane season quiet start
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2022/08/23/tropical-storms-hurricane-season-august/1141661249092/">https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2022/08/23/tropical-storms-hurricane-season-august/1141661249092/</a>
GIST	<p>Aug. 23 -- With a little more than a week remaining in the third month of the 2022 Atlantic hurricane season, there still has not been a single hurricane yet, and just three tropical storms thus far.</p> <p>However, AccuWeather forecasters are keeping an eye on some faint activity that could develop into something bigger over the next week, although chances are rather slim that a hurricane will develop in the near term.</p> <p>"While we are currently monitoring one weak wave of convection well out in the eastern Atlantic Ocean, conditions aren't projected to improve over the next five days, and tropical development is not likely," AccuWeather Meteorologist Adam Sadvary said.</p> <p>As for what's been preventing any tropical systems from spinning up over the last nearly eight weeks, "Dry, dusty air from the Sahara Desert, combined with unfavorable wind shear has kept the bulk of the Atlantic hurricane season quiet so far," Sadvary explained.</p> <p>The wave AccuWeather tropical forecasters are monitoring has been designated Invest 90L by the National Hurricane Center. Satellite imagery Monday showed Invest 90L was in a far-flung part of the basin and was flanked by dusty air masses.</p>

There are a few other tropical waves being monitored toward the end of the month, which, Sadvary said, may lead to an uptick in activity, so it's still possible August will get one "buzzer beater" system in its final days.

Warm sea waters are the most important ingredient for cyclone development, and while many things are to blame for an absence of storms, a lack of heat in the ocean is not one of them.

"Overall, waters in the Gulf of Mexico, southern Atlantic and western Caribbean Sea are running 1-2 degrees F above normal," Sadvary said. "These anomalies get even larger farther north up the East Coast some waters in the North Atlantic are 4-5 degrees F above normal."

Historically, the early part of September is the peak for tropical activity during the Atlantic hurricane season, which spans from June 1 to Nov. 30. Tropical systems should have a better chance to form next month, Sadvary said, as ocean water temperatures will be approaching their maximum, and the Bermuda high, which typically dictates wind patterns over the Atlantic, should be in a more favorable setup for activity.

So far this year, there have been three Atlantic named storms -- Tropical Storm Alex in early June and Tropical Storms Bonnie and Colin in the first week of July -- but nothing yet for August. This month has been so quiet in terms of tropical activity that it could end up being only the third time since 1961 that there has been a tropical storm-free August across the Atlantic basin.

The year 1961 was an incredibly busy hurricane season, just not in August.

There were 12 total Atlantic storms, eight of which were hurricanes and two of those reached Category 5 force: Hurricane Esther in September and Hurricane Hattie in late October. Esther made landfall in New England, resulting in about \$6 million in property damages -- \$59 million in 2022 dollars.

1997, on the other hand, wasn't quite as eventful. There were eight total storms, three of them hurricanes and only one was a major hurricane, meaning it reached at least Category 3 strength: Hurricane Erika in September, a Category 3 storm.

Hurricane Danny in July, a Category 1 storm, was the sole storm to make landfall at hurricane strength. Those two hurricanes caused a combined \$100 million in damages, \$184 million adjusted for inflation, and were blamed for seven deaths.

This season seems even more lackluster when compared to the last two Atlantic hurricane seasons, which were two of the most active in recorded history. Last year's 21 total tropical systems ranks third all time, and 2020 tops them all with 30.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Study: Swiss glaciers melting faster</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/science-switzerland-glaciers-climate-and-environment-9d4d5984f79b4a0300a673669d7b9d01">https://apnews.com/article/science-switzerland-glaciers-climate-and-environment-9d4d5984f79b4a0300a673669d7b9d01</a>
GIST	<p>GENEVA (AP) — Switzerland's 1,400 glaciers have lost more than half their total volume since the early 1930s, a new study has found, and researchers say the ice retreat is accelerating at a time of growing concerns about climate change.</p> <p>ETH Zurich, a respected federal polytechnic university, and the Swiss Federal Institute on Forest, Snow and Landscape Research on Monday announced the findings from a first-ever reconstruction of ice loss in Switzerland in the 20th century, based in part on an analysis of changes to the topography of glaciers since 1931.</p> <p>The researchers estimated that ice volumes on the glaciers had shrunk by half over the subsequent 85 years — until 2016. Since then, the glaciers have lost an additional 12%, over just six years.</p>

“Glacier retreat is accelerating. Closely observing this phenomenon and quantifying its historical dimensions is important because it allows us to infer the glaciers’ responses to a changing climate,” said Daniel Farinotti, a co-author of the study, which was published in scientific journal The Cryosphere.

By area, Switzerland’s glaciers amount to about half of all the total glaciers in the European Alps.

The teams drew on a combination of long-term observations of glaciers. That included measurements in the field and aerial and mountaintop photographs — including 22,000 taken from peaks between the two world wars. By using multiple sources, the researchers could fill in gaps. Only a few of Switzerland’s glaciers have been studied regularly over the years.

The research involved using decades-old techniques to allow for comparisons of the shape and position of images of terrain, and the use of cameras and instruments to measure angles of land areas. The teams compared surface topography of glaciers at different moments, allowing for calculations about the evolution in ice volumes.

Not all Swiss glaciers have been losing ice at the same rates, the researchers said. Altitude, amounts of debris on the glaciers, and the flatness of a glacier’s “snout” — its lowest part, which is the most vulnerable to melting — all affect the speeds of ice retreat.

The researchers also found that two periods — in the 1920s and the 1980s — actually experienced sporadic growth in glacier mass, but that was overshadowed by the broader trend of decline.

The findings could have broad implications for Switzerland’s long-term energy sources, since hydropower produces nearly 60% of the country’s electricity, according to government data.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 White spruce spreading north in Alaska</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wired.com/story/these-trees-are-spreading-north-in-alaska-thats-not-good/#intcid=wired-verso-hp-trending_e011e98a-a1d1-4b8a-8eb0-cb6563a2ca2e_popular4-1">https://www.wired.com/story/these-trees-are-spreading-north-in-alaska-thats-not-good/#intcid= wired-verso-hp-trending_e011e98a-a1d1-4b8a-8eb0-cb6563a2ca2e_popular4-1</a>
GIST	<p><b>IN THE SUMMER</b> of 2019, Roman Dial and his friend Brad Meiklejohn hired a single-engine bush plane out of Kotzebue, on the northwest coast of Alaska. Even those wings could only get them within a five-day hike of where they wanted to be: deep in the tundra, where Dial had noticed peculiar shadows showing up in satellite images.</p> <p>On the fourth day of that hike, the pair was walking along a caribou trail when Meiklejohn yelled, “Stop!” Dial thought his friend had seen a bear. But it was something more troubling: a stand of white spruce trees. The plants were well formed and chest-high, like small Christmas trees. And from a planetary perspective, they were bad news, because they were not at all where they were supposed to be. In this Alaskan tundra, fierce winds and biting cold favor shrubs, grasses, and grass-like sedges. The growing season is supposed to be just too short for trees to get a foothold, even if their seeds manage to fly north.</p> <p>The journey confirmed what Dial suspected, that the shadows in the satellite images were in fact out-of-place trees that are part of a phenomenon known as <a href="#">Arctic greening</a>. As the Arctic warms <a href="#">more than four times faster</a> than the rest of the planet, that’s bringing down the ecological barriers for plants in the far north, and more vegetation is marching toward the pole. “The next day we found more and more as we headed east, until we discovered an Arctic savanna of white spruce trees,” recalls Dial, an ecologist at Alaska Pacific University. “Sounds funny to say, it was maybe the most exciting hike I’ve ever been on.”</p> <p>Arctic greening is a blaring warning light on the climate damage dashboard, both for <a href="#">the region and the world at large</a>. The proliferation of shrubs is one thing—they’re small and grow relatively quickly—but long-lived white spruce are another thing entirely. “When you see trees growing, you know that the climate has really shifted,” says Dial. “It’s not like five years of weather, or 10 years of weather. It’s 30 years of climate that’s established new trees in new places.”</p>



Writing [this month](#) in the journal *Nature*, Dial and his colleagues put hard numbers on what they discovered in the Alaskan tundra: White spruce, both as individuals and as a population, are growing exponentially there. The population is now moving north at a rate of 2.5 miles per decade, faster than any other conifer treeline that scientists have measured, in what should be one of the most inhospitable places on the planet for a tree.

Usually, spruce seeds don't travel more than a few hundred feet from a tree. But Dial is finding young white spruce growing from seeds that must have traveled 5 to 7 miles—and *over mountains*, no less. The population isn't so much moving north as it is leaping. "These new colonists, you'd think that they're beyond the treeline, they should just be struggling. But they're actually growing really rapidly," says Dial. "They're happy as pigs in poop—they're just going gangbusters out there in the Arctic tundra and alpine tundra. They're way ahead. They're even doing better than the shrubs."

Exactly why they're doing so well demands more research, but Dial speculates that the colonists have access to untapped nutrients in the soil. By contrast, back at the treeline, existing generations of white spruce have already extracted the goodies from the soil, perhaps slowing their march. "If you want to study how forests are going to move, it's probably not appropriate to go to a treeline, because a treeline is where they're kind of stalled out," says Dial. "If you want to figure out, 'how can a business do better?' you probably don't go study a struggling business. You go look for startups that are doing well."

And, boy, business is booming for white spruce right now. Soil microbes in this part of the Arctic are providing a sort of stimulus package for them. The microbes multiply as the dirt warms, processing nutrients for the trees to use. "Obviously, warming is the driving factor—warmer conditions, longer growing seasons," says macroscale ecologist Scott Goetz, who [studies Arctic greening](#) at Northern Arizona University but wasn't involved in this new research. "So it's all become much more suitable, and I think nutrients are just part of the story."

The white spruce colonists are likely warming the Arctic landscape too. Normally, snow cover makes these northern lands reflect the sun's energy back into space—in scientific parlance, the land's "albedo" is high. But trees are darker, so they have a lower albedo and absorb heat, which warms the area. "The albedo effect is the big thing," says Goetz. "They absorb a lot more energy."

(This is also why the Arctic, in general, is warming so much faster than the rest of the planet: As sea ice disappears, it exposes darker waters underneath, which absorb more of the sun's energy.)

Counterintuitively, by acting as a sort of snare to trap snow against the ground, a forest further heats the soil. A thick layer of snow prevents the chill of winter from penetrating into the ground, and the extra trees block cold winds. (That trapped snow also provides lots of moisture for those trees in the future, creating a feedback loop.)

Thawing permafrost is the aspect of Arctic greening that concerns scientists the most. These frozen soils are loaded with dead organic matter that hasn't fully decomposed, but will decay rapidly once it thaws. Microbes then begin munching on the material, [spewing both carbon dioxide and methane](#), an [extremely potent greenhouse gas](#). Permafrost is now thawing so fast that Arctic land is collapsing, [gouging great big holes in the landscape](#). "The implications are significant," says Goetz. "It always comes around to the permafrost in the end, because that's the big carbon reservoir that's being mobilized."

Yet the Arctic isn't a monolith. In the part of northwest Alaska Dial studied, white spruce are on a northward sprint—but to the east, they don't seem to have had the same success. "It's not happening everywhere. The next question to answer is, why?" asks Dial. "What are the climatic controls on what determines where trees move fast?"

Figuring that out will require still more satellite imagery and multi-day hikes into the tundra—and if all goes according to plan, no bears.

HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Northwest hotter summers as norm?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/hotter-summer-could-become-norm-pacific-northwest/5OETTLRR55AEXLIFZCMHXVSTPM/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/hotter-summer-could-become-norm-pacific-northwest/5OETTLRR55AEXLIFZCMHXVSTPM/</a>
GIST	<p>Hotter than normal summers for the Pacific Northwest are likely here to stay. That's the word from a NOAA scientist, who says you can blame climate change.</p> <p>While most of us simply can't escape to a place like Green Lake in the middle of the day just to cool off, for some workers, when it's hot outside, it's even hotter inside.</p> <p>If you like it hot, you likely couldn't do any better than dropping in at the Crescent Arms Drycleaning in Belltown.</p> <p>"Right now 110 degrees," guessed manager Margarito Garduno. And that's inside.</p> <p>He says they try to make it bearable.</p> <p>"I have like the AC and ... fans working, too," he said. "And drink lots of water. Lots of water. Pretty much that's the key."</p> <p>Still, that isn't always enough.</p> <p>"Yeah, I need to take a little break, you know, every hour or two hours, too," Garduno said.</p> <p>According to a weather expert at NOAA, we'd better get used to it because climate change is upon us.</p> <p>"It doesn't mean that we're always going to be hot," Kirby Cook said. "But it does mean that more and more we are going to see these kind of ... warmer than normal periods of time and staying warmer later in the season and starting the season warmer."</p> <p>So we wanted to know once this record-breaking summer heat is over, what we can expect when summer ends.</p> <p>"If we look at the fall, right now, the temperature outlook for much of the Pacific Northwest for temperatures is kind of a 50-50 chance of cooler than normal or a warmer than normal," said Cook.</p> <p>No matter, it will be getting closer to the time of year when it's quite pleasant here at Crescent Arms Drycleaning.</p> <p>"Yup," said Garduno. "I'm so happy in winter."</p> <p>That's good. Because we're supposed to have an El Nino winter, which means the weather will be colder than normal.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Wrong weather forecast prompts firing?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/world/heads-of-hungary-weather-service-fired-after-wrong-forecast/">https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/world/heads-of-hungary-weather-service-fired-after-wrong-forecast/</a>
GIST	<p>BUDAPEST, Hungary (AP) — The two top officials of Hungary's meteorological service were fired Monday after an inaccurate rain forecast prompted the postponement of a fireworks display on the country's most important national holiday.</p> <p>The firings of the head and deputy head of the National Meteorological Service prompted accusations of political interference from Hungary's nationalist government.</p>

The annual St. Stephen's Day fireworks show along the Danube River in Budapest — billed as the largest display in Europe — was called off Saturday afternoon based on forecasts that said extreme weather was likely around the 9 p.m. start time.

By evening, the storms had not materialized in the capital, but the show, which typically draws more than a million spectators, already had been rescheduled for the next week due to safety concerns.

The firings were announced in a brief statement by Minister of Technology and Industry Laszlo Palkovics, a top cabinet member in the government of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

The fired weather service chief, Kornelia Radics, had served in her post since 2013 and her deputy, Gyula Horvath, since 2016.

While the minister did not provide a reason for the dismissals, the meteorological service had received harsh criticism in Hungary's government-aligned media, which charged that the service's "gravely wrong" forecast had caused a needless postponement of the fireworks display.

The Ministry of Technology and Industry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Critics of Orban's government, which has been accused of corruption, nepotism and anti-democratic tendencies, charged that the firings were politically motivated and reminiscent of Hungary's communist past.

In a Tuesday statement, the meteorological service demanded the reinstatement of its fired leaders. The agency described coming under "political pressure" concerning its assessments of weather models on the holiday and that those applying the pressure "ignored the scientifically accepted uncertainty inherent in meteorological forecasts."

"It is our firm view that, despite considerable pressure from decision-makers, our colleagues ... provided the best of their knowledge and are not responsible for any alleged or actual damage," the service wrote.

Independent lawmaker Akos Hadhazy wrote in a Facebook post Monday that the meteorological service had "never before had such a responsibility. They can choose to remain silent, or they can choose to strike until the chief, who was fired in a communist-style move, is reinstated."

"Their decision could change the fate of the whole country," Hadhazy wrote.

The planned St. Stephen's Day display, held every Aug. 20, was to present "a condensed chronicle of a thousand years from the birth of Christian Hungary to the present day, focusing on the lessons of national values," according to the event's website.

It was billed as a "tableau of the great periods and significant moments of Hungarian history, emphasizing the important national values that can also provide a moral lesson for everyday life."

While the display is a popular annual event, some Hungarians oppose its scale and cost in the country of fewer than 10 million inhabitants. A petition against holding the display gathered nearly 200,000 signatures, arguing the money should be used to support Hungary's floundering economy.

"In a country where the currency is weakening day by day while prices are rising, there is no place for such a luxurious spectacle," the petition reads.

The postponement of the fireworks came 16 years after a deadly St. Stephen's Day event in 2006, when strong storms with wind gusts of up to 60 miles per hour (100 kilometers per hour) hit Budapest as around 1.5 million people had gathered to view the display.

	Five people were killed and more than 300 were injured amid the panic that ensued.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Unidentified virus kills dozens Mich. dogs</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.woodtv.com/news/michigan/dozens-of-michigan-dogs-killed-possibly-by-new-form-of-parvovirus/">https://www.woodtv.com/news/michigan/dozens-of-michigan-dogs-killed-possibly-by-new-form-of-parvovirus/</a>
GIST	<p>GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (WOOD) — State officials are encouraging pet owners to take extra precautions with their dogs while the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development investigates a new deadly virus that has been detected in the northern Lower Peninsula.</p> <p>According to a news release, Michigan State Veterinarian Nora Wineland says the virus could be a new or modified strain of canine parvovirus, but more testing is needed for confirmation.</p> <p>The first cases were reported earlier this month in Otsego and Clare counties. According to <a href="#">a report from the Clare County Cleaver</a>, more than 30 dogs died in a matter of days from the virus. One breeder reported losing 21 puppies and dogs.</p> <p>Clare County Animal Control Director Rudi Hicks told the Cleaver last week that her facility had eight dogs get sick with the virus and show symptoms that mimicked parvo — vomiting, diarrhea, blood in stool — but all tested negative for canine parvovirus. Hicks also noted that some of the dogs were vaccinated against canine parvovirus, but not all.</p> <p>An <a href="#">MDARD release issued Monday</a> confirmed that some of those dogs tested positive for parvo during a necropsy.</p> <p>“We are still in the early stages of this investigation. ... However, there are more results pending and more to be learned,” Wineland said in a release. “When MDARD first learned of these cases in northern Michigan, we immediately reached out to the veterinarians and animal shelters involved and began our response efforts. Protecting animal and public health is one of the department’s key pillars, but it is a team effort. Dog owners need to ensure their pet is up to date on routine vaccinations as it’s the first step in keeping your pet healthy.”</p> <p>MDARD is encouraging all dog owners to keep their pets updated on routine vaccinations — especially those who live in or travel to the northern Lower Peninsula. Those vaccines include canine parvovirus, rabies, canine distemper, adenovirus, parainfluenza and leptospirosis.</p> <p>The MDARD recommends keeping dogs and puppies away from other animals until they are fully vaccinated, keeping dogs away from other animals if they are showing any signs of illness and cleaning up after your pet when walking them in public.</p> <p>While the virus has not been reported yet in West Michigan, Angela Hollinshead, the director of the Kent County Animal Shelter, says she is keeping a close eye on the situation. For now, she says most of the advice is common sense.</p> <p>“I think it’s a good reminder for people to just be safe with your pet and be mindful of pet waste,” Hollinshead told News 8. “If you’re walking your pet, it’s really important that you pick it up, because even though your dog may not have signs or symptoms of an illness, they could still be carrying something that they could spread, not just parvovirus, but other things, parasites. It is just good practice and common courtesy to pick up after your pet.”</p> <p>She continued: “If you go to the dog park and you notice a dog that has, for example, a bowel movement that looks suspicious and runny, something like that, leave. Don’t let your dog hang out around other dogs that are showing any signs and symptoms of illness.”</p>

	<p>While vaccines aren't 100% effective at preventing illness or death, they can go a long way toward protecting your pet. Hollinshead says it's important to do what you can for your pet's health.</p> <p>"It's really sad when we have animals that are presented to us at the shelter for illness and the owners can't afford hospitalization. They reach out to their animal shelters, their humane societies, their rescues for support on this when, realistically, a vaccine probably could have prevented this from happening," Hollinshead said. "Now, with the cases that we're seeing with this new development, we don't know 100% what's causing it, but the best precautions that we can take are making sure that our pets are vaccinated."</p> <p>The Kent County Animal Shelter provides a basic package of vaccines for any animal that comes into its care, including distemper and parvovirus, while other are administered on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p><a href="#">Canine parvovirus</a> is highly contagious and can spread through direct contact or items contaminated by a dog's feces. Canine parvovirus is not contagious to people or other animals.</p>
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## Crime, Criminals

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HEADLINE	<b>08/23 Children fear going to school in Uvalde</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/23/us/uvalde-back-to-school-arredondo.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/23/us/uvalde-back-to-school-arredondo.html</a>
GIST	<p>UVALDE, Texas — With a little more than two weeks left before the beginning of the school year, Tina Quintanilla-Taylor drove her 9-year-old daughter, Mehle, past the new school where she was supposed to start fourth grade.</p> <p>The school is just a mile or so away from the one she attended last year, Robb Elementary School, now permanently closed after a gunman's shooting rampage left 19 students and two teachers dead. The new school looked clean and welcoming, but Mehle and her mother said they felt uneasy. There were no police officers visible, Mehle said. The newly installed fencing, she said, looked "skinny" and easy to climb.</p> <p>"I don't feel safe," she told her mother.</p> <p>Ms. Quintanilla-Taylor has decided to enroll her daughter in online classes approved by the state, as have many other parents in Uvalde, where the trauma of the May 24 shooting still lingers after a summer of mourning. Some parents said they are also considering private schools, including one operated by Sacred Heart Catholic Church, which began the new school year on Aug. 15 with double its enrollment from last year for students in prekindergarten through sixth grade.</p> <p>"They are not ready for the new school year," Ms. Quintanilla-Taylor said. "Nobody feels safe going back to school."</p> <p>Parents have been confronting school board members at meetings to demand answers about the flawed police response to the shooting and new security measures to keep students safe at school.</p> <p>A <a href="#">legislative committee that investigated the attack</a> found serious deficiencies in the school's readiness for a mass shooting, including internal and external doors that were left unlocked, contrary to school protocols, and a five-foot exterior fence that the gunman was able to easily climb over.</p> <p>The committee also found "systemic failures and egregiously poor decision making" on the part of the police officers who waited more than an hour to take down the gunman. Investigators for the Texas Department of Public Safety said the chief of the school district police force, Pete Arredondo, acting as incident commander over the flawed response, failed to follow standard law enforcement training that could have ended the attack more quickly and saved lives.</p>

The school board has scheduled a hearing on Wednesday during which it plans to fire Chief Arredondo, who has been on unpaid leave since late July. Parents have expressed frustration at the length of that process, and many said they had been given little assurance that the district was equipped to prevent a similar tragedy.

Officials with the school district said the start of the school year had been delayed until Sept. 6, later than neighboring districts, to ensure students felt safe attending classes in person. The district said it was fortifying campuses with new eight-foot fences, security cameras, replacement door locks and additional police officers. Gov. Greg Abbott said he had assigned more than 30 state troopers to provide extra security.

With plans to eventually demolish Robb Elementary, the school district is installing portable classrooms at other schools to accommodate students, while online classes will be available for those who do not feel ready to return in person.

“We are making progress,” Hal Harrell, the superintendent, told parents in a video message that outlined the new safety measures. “These are components that will be installed throughout the district, not just in one campus or two campuses.”

But many parents said the process of installing the new security equipment had been slow, and they do not trust that it will all be ready on time.

The trauma remains fresh for those who survived the worst school massacre since the Sandy Hook shooting in Newtown, Conn., a decade ago, and many of the families spent the summer organizing to demand more accountability from their local officials. In early July, hundreds of people marched from the Robb Elementary campus to the town square to demand the firing of police officers who led the flawed response, and also to call for stricter gun laws and better school safety measures.

More than a dozen residents have formed a group, Uvalde Strong for Gun Safety, to advocate stronger gun control legislation and safer schools. During a recent meeting, one of the group’s leaders, Dr. Roy Guerrero, a pediatrician who testified before Congress about the devastating injuries he saw that day, reminded parents that they were within their rights to keep their children out of school.

“Do not send them and we’ll see what happens, agreed? This is how you are going to respond to them. Don’t even send them virtually,” Dr. Guerrero told them. “That’s what I tell every single one of my patients.”

Ms. Quintanilla-Taylor, the mother of the 9-year-old who plans to take online courses starting this week, has joined the chorus of families who have demanded to know why it has taken so long to fire Chief Arredondo.

Dr. Harrell, the superintendent, recommended his firing in July, but the school board has repeatedly delayed taking action, in part because of the chief’s requests for postponements.

“His lack of action led to the loss of lives,” Ms. Quintanilla-Taylor said. “They should have fired him a long time ago. He took an oath. He failed that oath.”

That sentiment is shared by many others in town, including Arnulfo Reyes, a teacher at Robb Elementary who feels lucky to be alive after being shot twice and taunted for more than an hour by the gunman as officers stood idle in a nearby hallway.

In this small town of 15,000, where many people are related, it was not an unusual twist of fate that Chief Arredondo would be Mr. Reyes’s cousin. But that has not changed Mr. Reyes’s view of what should happen. “I think he needs to go first. Fire him and the rest will follow like a domino. We need accountability,” Mr. Reyes said.



School district officials have declined to say how many students will be returning to in-person classes at other campuses, and how many have elected to take classes online.

Jimmy Olivarez, 55, whose 10-year-old granddaughter, Kendall, was in Room 112 when the gunman entered, said the mere mention of sending children back to school filled her with dread. Kendall was shot twice, in her left shoulder and back. One of her teachers, Irma Garcia, landed on top of her, probably shielding her from more bullets, Mr. Olivarez said.

Ms. Garcia and a second teacher in the classroom died, but Kendall's cousin and classmate pulled Kendall to safety.

She underwent five surgeries in the first 10 days at a hospital in San Antonio. She survived them, but remains riddled with anxiety, her grandfather said. During a recent thunderstorm, he said, Kendall became frightened by the rain and thunder. "She thinks it is bullets all over again," he said. He took her to a corner store to buy lottery tickets to calm her down.

He said he was not sure if she would take a break from school altogether, or attend online classes. But one thing was certain, he said, "She's not going back to school. She doesn't feel safe. She is afraid that it is going to happen again."

Cynthia Herrera is one of several parents who said they were closely monitoring the district's progress in making safety improvements. The 10-year-old stepson she raised since he was 3, Jose, was killed in the shooting. Her daughter, Andrea, 10, has been left traumatized, she said.

Bullets had entered Andrea's classroom through the walls; the little girl recalled seeing a teacher be shot moments before Andrea climbed through a window to safety.

Ms. Herrera said there were safety issues at the school that came to light even before the shooting. Mr. Reyes, Jose's teacher, reported two months before the attack that the lock on his classroom door lock was faulty, but it was never fixed.

The state legislative report noted that teachers and other staff members sometimes used rudimentary tools, such as rocks, wedges and magnets, to prevent doors from completely shutting and automatically locking, a practice that was discouraged by the school police to no avail.

"I just pray that they learned their lesson and that they will keep our children safe," Ms. Herrera said about the school district.

One day last week, Andrea tried to decide whether to return to school — without her brother.

She paraded around her grandmother's modest home wearing a maroon backpack and talked about seeing her friends again. Her fifth-grade classes have been scheduled at Flores Middle School, less than two miles from her old school, but she is not sure where her friends will land.

Her mother told her that the decision on whether to go back was hers and reassured her that she could always choose to take online classes if she felt unsafe on campus.

"What do you think, 'Buela?" Andrea asked her grandmother, Beatriz Herrera. She should trust her own instincts, the elder Ms. Herrera replied.

So it was settled. "I want to go back to school," Andrea said.

"OK," her mother replied. "We're going back."

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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/truck-carrying-equipment-for-special-olympics-stolen-in-tukwila">https://www.q13fox.com/news/truck-carrying-equipment-for-special-olympics-stolen-in-tukwila</a>
GIST	<p><b>TUKWILA, Wash.</b> - Special Olympics <a href="#">Washington</a> is asking for help recovering a truck full of sports equipment stolen in <a href="#">Tukwila</a> over the weekend.</p> <p>The athletic organization said a U-Haul they rented to carry equipment was stolen late Sunday night in Tukwila. Officials say the truck contained Special Olympics Washington banners and signs, medals and other gear.</p> <p>"To say we're disappointed is an understatement," reads a <a href="#">Facebook post</a> from the organization, "especially since the items in the truck are worthless to the thieves, but so vital for producing priceless experiences for our athletes."</p> <p>Tukwila Police are investigating the case.</p> <p>Anyone with information on the thievery or who has seen any stolen items is urged to call Tukwila Police at (206) 241-2121.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Mapping risk factors of human trafficking</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.geospatialworld.net/prime/mapping-human-trafficking/">https://www.geospatialworld.net/prime/mapping-human-trafficking/</a>
GIST	<p>Combating human trafficking is a complex global issue comprising of a multitude of risk factors. Federal, state, and local law enforcement are working on various angles in combating the multibillion-dollar criminal nexus.</p> <p>With the ongoing advancements in technology and data sciences today, Geographic Information System (GIS) engineering can be applied to countering human trafficking operations through a data-driven model of mapping and analyzing the socioeconomic risk factors of human trafficking and tracking real-time metadata to influence law enforcing decisions.</p> <p><b>Human trafficking</b></p> <p>Human trafficking (or modern-day slavery) is one of the fastest growing crimes in the world today. Polaris “defines human trafficking as the use of force, fraud, or coercion to compel a person into commercial sex acts or labor against their will.”</p> <p>Anyone can be a victim of human trafficking, but it is important to remember that some people are at a greater risk because of socioeconomic vulnerability factors.</p>

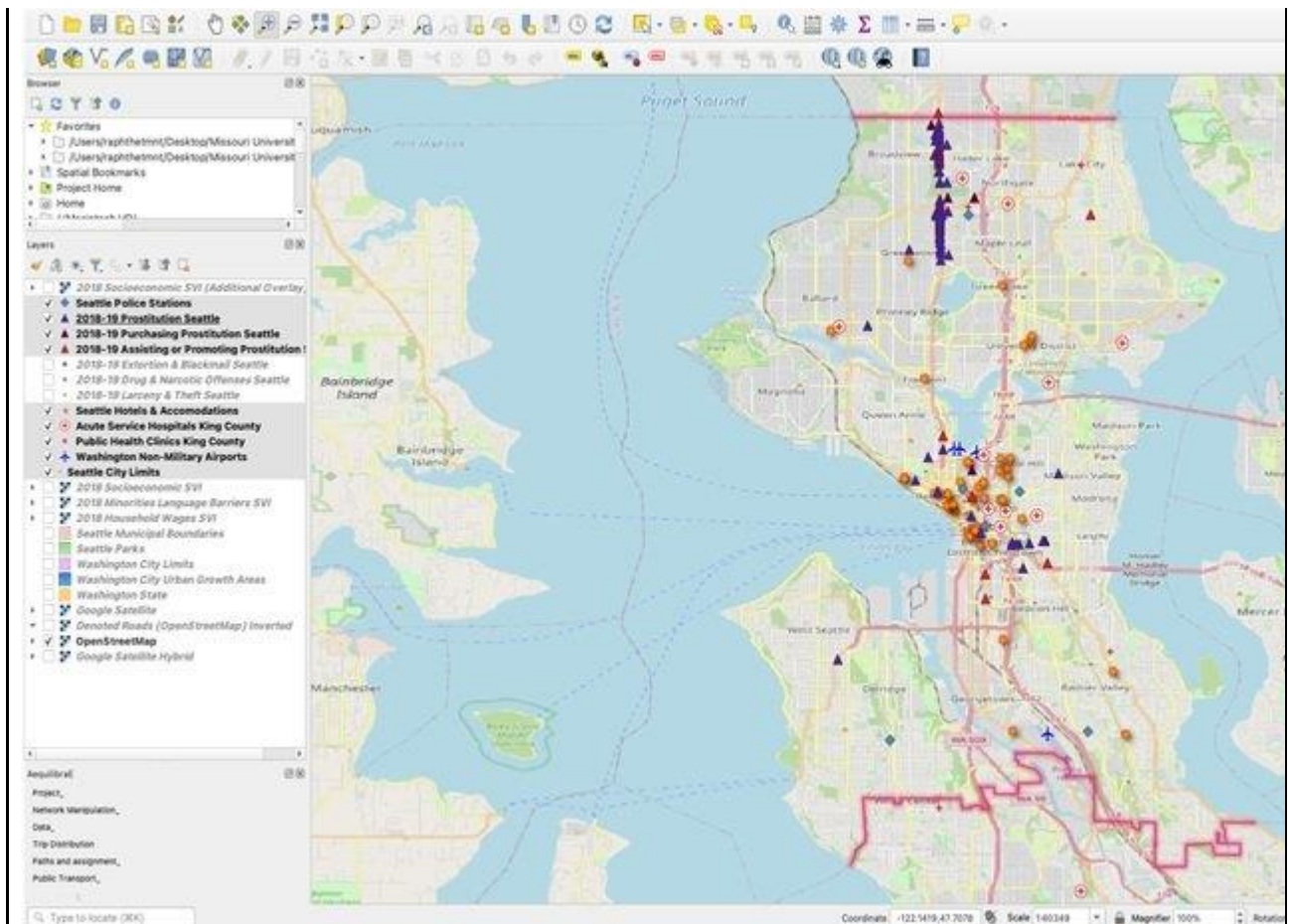


Image 1: QGIS map utilizing an OpenStreetMap plug-in and various socioeconomic attribute data from ArcGIS Hub, King County GIS Open Data, Seattle GeoData, Seattle Open Data Portal, and the Seattle Police Department to map risk factors for human trafficking in Seattle, WA. (Author: Raphael Garcia)

### Mapping the risk factors

To further understand human trafficking, it is important to understand the human trafficking kill chain, which encompasses the recruitment, transportation, entrapment, brokering, delivery, and exploitation of a victim(s).

The ideal solution to ending human trafficking is to prevent individuals from entering the initial vacuum into the recruitment phase of the human trafficking kill chain. To achieve this goal, it is vital to understand the correlating risk factors shared by victims of human trafficking.

Socioeconomic risk factors are what build the environment for human trafficking to thrive in, especially in areas of greater population densities, where there exists an ample supply of human capital and a foothold for a demand supplemented by the brokering of money in exchange for a human. Human trafficking is all about profiting from the sex, labor, and/or debt bondage of another human being.

Risk factors of human trafficking can include (but are not limited to) a low social vulnerability index, high unemployment rates, a deficiency of police presence, low household wages, insufficient healthcare or insurance, a lack of education or poor school systems, high violent crime rates, growing child poverty rates, homelessness, accessibility to drugs, work visas, language barriers, inadequate social programs, international boundaries, and a proximity to a numerous amount of transportation hubs (airports, seaports, highways, etc.) and hotels.



Image 2: QGIS Layers legend utilized to map and analyze factors such as the social vulnerability index, language barriers, household wages, crime, prostitution, drug and narcotic offenses, access to healthcare, and proximity to hotels, airports, and transportation hubs. (Author: Raphael Garcia)

How can we build a concise understanding of how these risk factors correlate with one another? The answer is through a data-driven approach that paints the common operating picture of the environment with GIS systems such as QGIS.

QGIS is a free open-source software that anyone can use to display, view, and edit geospatial data. Images 1, 2, and 3 in this article showcase the utilization of publicly accessible, and georeferenced vector, raster, and attribute data to pair demographics with socioeconomic and spatial analysis; thus, helping to build correlations and patterns of both victims and criminals.

Advancements in geocoding and data analysis are enabling real-time mapping that can equip legislators, lawmakers, and social workers with the ability to identify risk factors and make educated decisions in their own communities.



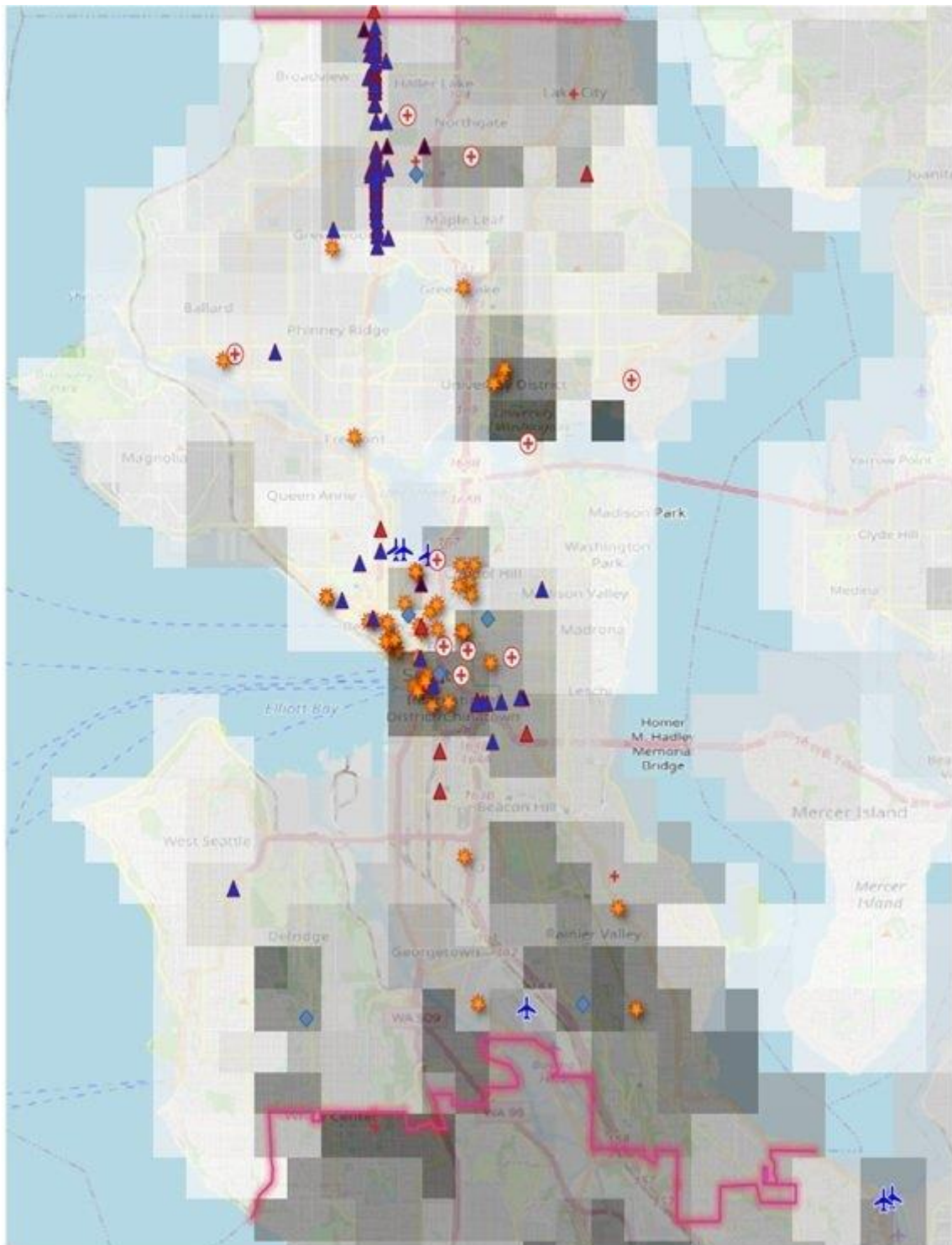


Image 3: QGIS map of Seattle with layer overlays taken from Image 2 of this article. Depicted are socioeconomic factors including the social vulnerability index, prostitution offenses, and the location of hotels, airports, police stations, and healthcare facilities. (Author: Raphael Garcia)

### **GIS Applications to Combat Human Trafficking**

With a multitude of metadata being collected from web browsers and tracked through satellites and receivers, law enforcement agencies are better equipped to intervene during all phases of the human trafficking kill chain. GIS platforms are efficiently saving law enforcement time in gathering evidence and information, so that most of the energy can be tailored towards problem solving, decision making, and manning the force.

	<p>Combating human trafficking through GIS platforms does not solely have to be on the onus of law enforcement. Governments are building transparency with increasing ubiquitous access to socioeconomic geodata that everyday citizens can use in building a safer community and advocating for solutions to issues within the greater communities.</p> <p>In the civilian sector, companies like Oracle are already syncing decentralized data from both social media and GIS databases and bringing them into one centralized database to help simplify data for law enforcement to utilize to stop traffickers and save victims.</p> <p>Law enforcement cannot be geographically located everywhere all the time; it requires a substantial amount of community cooperation and intelligence sharing to promote the safety and welfare for all. This signifies the future of an evolving cloud-based collaboration in data driven and GIS approaches to mapping out socioeconomic issues and combating crimes such as human trafficking.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Seattle firefighters face violent attacks</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.newsnationnow.com/morninginamerica/seattle-firefighters-face-violent-attacks/">https://www.newsnationnow.com/morninginamerica/seattle-firefighters-face-violent-attacks/</a>
GIST	<p>(<a href="#">NewsNation</a>) — Seattle firefighters say they are becoming the targets of violent attacks. There have been more than 40 alleged acts of violence reported in the past four months, <a href="#">according to KOMO</a>.</p> <p>Attacks vary from rocks being thrown at them to firefighters being chased around fire engines by someone with a knife. One female firefighter even reported being slapped and kicked.</p> <p>Most of the violent reports are coming from homeless camps, and now the Seattle Fire Fighters Union IAFF Local 27 is demanding that the city council take action.</p> <p>Jim Fuda, the executive director of Crime Stoppers of Puget Sound, said he has never heard of attacks on firemen like this, even during his 33 years as a police officer.</p> <p>Fuda explained the city’s homeless camps have become an issue, blaming drugs and improper handling of mental health. He said that the city needs to take accountability for mishandling the homeless problem.</p> <p>“Accountability needs to be held,” Fuda said. He explained that since 2020, <a href="#">the city’s police department staffing is down 40%</a>, and there aren’t enough officers to handle priority-one calls. He said there needs to be a different solution to the violence because there <a href="#">aren’t enough police officers</a> to ride along with firefighters to keep them safe. “Some of these people need to go to jail, and the mentally ill need to be forced to take their medications and become productive members of our society.”</p> <p>Fuda said firefighters have a right to demand safety at work. When they are on the job, firefighters want to feel protected so they can focus on the emergency situations they are there to help.</p> <p>“So accountability is what the key is here, and more staffing,” Fuda reiterated.</p> <p>Mayor Bruce Harrell’s office has launched the <a href="#">Homelessness Action Plan</a> as an effort to address the city’s homeless problem. The city first declared a <a href="#">state of emergency for homelessness back in 2015</a> but has grown even worse since the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>“By acting with urgency and compassion we can – and will – move from crisis response to stability and sustainability,” Harrell said in a statement.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Anti-Semitic incidents all-time high in 2021</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20220822-antisemitic-incidents-in-united-states-reached-alltime-high-in-2021">https://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20220822-antisemitic-incidents-in-united-states-reached-alltime-high-in-2021</a>



Antisemitic incidents reached an all-time high in the United States in 2021, with a total of 2,717 incidents of assault, harassment and vandalism reported to ADL (the Anti-Defamation League). This represents the highest number of incidents on record since ADL began tracking antisemitic incidents in 1979 – an average of more than seven incidents per day and a 34 percent increase year over year.

ADL's annual [Audit of Antisemitic Incidents](#), issued today, found that antisemitic incidents reached a high watermark across virtually every category. Attacks against Jewish institutions, including Jewish community centers (JCCs) and synagogues, were up by 61 percent, incidents at K-12 schools increased 106 percent, and incidents on college campuses rose 21 percent.

Assaults – considered the most serious incident type because it involves person-on-person physical violence triggered by antisemitic animus – increased 167 percent, jumping to a total of 88 reports in 2021 from 33 in 2020. Incidents of harassment were up 43 percent, and acts of antisemitic vandalism rose 14 percent.

A substantial surge was reported during the May 2021 conflict between Israel and Hamas. There was a staggering 148 percent increase in reports of antisemitic incidents that month when compared in May 2020, as tensions were high and hundreds of anti-Israel protests took place in dozens of U.S. cities. As Jewish individuals were violently beaten in the streets from New York to Los Angeles, a total of 387 incidents were reported that month with 297 of the incidents occurring after May 10, the date marking the official start of military action.

“While we have always seen a rise in antisemitic activity during periods of increased hostilities between Israel and terrorist groups, the violence we witnessed in America during the conflict last May was shocking,” said Jonathan A. Greenblatt, ADL CEO and National Director. “Jews were being attacked in the streets for no other reason than the fact that they were Jewish, and it seemed as if the working assumption was that if you were Jewish, you were blameworthy for what was happening half a world away.”

The May conflict represented only one of several spikes reported throughout the year and, overall, anti-Israel sentiment did not account for the lion's share of incidents in 2021. In fact, antisemitic acts also spiked in November and December, times when there was no similar triggering factor. Nearly 18 percent of the incidents last year – at least 484 – were attributable to actions by domestic extremists.

“When it comes to antisemitic activity in America, you cannot point to any single ideology or belief system, and in many cases, we simply don't know the motivation,” said Greenblatt. “But we do know that Jews are experiencing more antisemitic incidents than we have in this country in at least 40 years, and that's a deeply troubling indicator of larger societal fissures.”

### Major Findings

In 2021, ADL counted a total of 2,717 antisemitic incidents across the U.S. This represents a 34 percent increase from the 2,026 incidents recorded in 2020 and is the highest number on record since ADL began tracking antisemitic incidents in 1979. The Audit classifies incidents into three categories:

- **Assault:** A total of 88 incidents were categorized as assault, defined as cases where Jewish people (or people perceived to be Jewish) were targeted with physical violence accompanied by evidence of antisemitic animus. Antisemitic assaults increased 167 percent from the 33 reported in 2020. Eleven of the assaults in 2021 were perpetrated with deadly weapons. The 88 incidents of assault included 131 victims. Fortunately, no fatalities linked to antisemitic assaults were reported in 2021.
- **Harassment:** Of the total, 1,776 incidents were categorized as harassment, defined as cases where one or more Jewish people (or people perceived to be Jewish) were harassed with antisemitic slurs, stereotypes or conspiracy theories. Acts of harassment increased 43 percent, up from 1,242 incidents in 2020.
- **Vandalism:** Another 853 incidents were categorized as vandalism, defined as cases where property was damaged along with evidence of antisemitic intent. Acts of antisemitic vandalism increased 14 percent from the 751 incidents reported in 2020. Swastikas, which are generally interpreted as symbols of antisemitic hatred, were present in more than two-thirds (578) of these incidents.

Incidents were reported in all 50 states as well as the District of Columbia. The states with the highest number of incidents were New York (416), New Jersey (370), California (367), Florida (190), Michigan (112) and Texas (112). Combined, these states accounted for 58 percent of the total incidents.

In 2021, there were 525 reported incidents at Jewish institutions such as synagogues, Jewish community centers and Jewish schools, an increase of 61 percent from 327 in 2020. Of the total, 413 were incidents of harassment, 101 were incidents of vandalism and 11 were assaults. About one-quarter of the harassment incidents (111) were linked to anti-Zionist or anti-Israel sentiments.

ADL's Audit recorded 484 antisemitic incidents attributed to known extremist groups or individuals inspired by extremist ideology. This represents 18 percent of the total number of incidents. Racially or ethnically motivated violent (RMVE) extremist groups or extremists were responsible for 422 antisemitic propaganda distributions, a 52 percent increase year over year.

A total of 345 antisemitic incidents in 2021 involved references to Israel or Zionism, compared to 178 in 2020. Of those, 68 appeared in the form of RMVE propaganda efforts, which attempt to foment anti-Israel and antisemitic beliefs.

A total of 494 incidents were identified through newly established partnerships between ADL and several Jewish organizations, including the Community Security Initiative (CSI), Community Security Service (CSS), Hillel International, Secure Community Network (SCN), Union of Reform Judaism and the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. This shared reporting represented 18 percent of the total incidents. Even without improved reporting through cooperative partnerships, the 2021 Audit numbers still would have been the highest recorded by ADL, with 2,223 incidents.

The ADL Center on Extremism has reflected the complete 2021 data, as well as data from the previous three years, on its [H.E.A.T. Map, an interactive online tool](#) that allows users to geographically chart antisemitic incidents and events nationally and regionally.

#### **Israel-Hamas Conflict Stokes Antisemitism in U.S.**

On May 10, 2021, fighting broke out between Israel and Hamas with heightened tensions and violence in some Israeli cities with large Arab and Jewish populations. As the crisis unfolded, there was a surge of antisemitic incidents targeting Jewish communities and individuals in the U.S. and around the world.

Between May 10 and the end of the month, ADL tracked a 141 percent increase in incidents over the same time period in 2020. There were 211 cases of harassment, 71 cases of vandalism and 15 assaults reported across the U.S., and nearly 40 percent of the total incidents that month included explicit references to Israel or Zionism.

At least eight of the antisemitic assaults were motivated by anti-Israel or anti-Zionist sentiment. For example, on May 18, patrons at a Los Angeles restaurant were attacked by individuals who arrived in cars carrying Palestinian flags who said, "You should be ashamed of yourselves" after the customers confirmed they were Jewish. The Palestinian supporters pushed one of the victims to the ground and kicked him. Soon after, a brawl erupted, and subsequent [news reports](#) indicated the attackers also hurled anti-Jewish slurs. [On May 20, in Manhattan](#), a Jewish man wearing a yarmulke was attacked by a group of individuals who yelled anti-Jewish and anti-Israel slurs while they punched, kicked, pepper-sprayed and beat him.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Woman opens fire Midtown Atlanta: kills 2</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/22/us/atlanta-shooting.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/22/us/atlanta-shooting.html</a>
GIST	A woman shot and killed two people and injured a third in Midtown Atlanta on Monday, prompting an extensive search by multiple law enforcement agencies that led to her arrest at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, the police said.

The daytime shooting drew heavily armed police officers to busy midtown on Monday afternoon and briefly led the police to urge residents to stay off the streets as they searched for the person responsible for the shooting.

About two hours after shooting, the Atlanta Police said that a woman had been arrested at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport and that officers had recovered a handgun. The police did not immediately release the woman's name or a possible motive.

"We do not believe these were random acts of violence," Darin Schierbaum, interim chief of the Atlanta Police Department, said at a news conference. "We believe individuals were likely targeted that were harmed today."

Mayor Andre Dickens praised the "strong coordination and professionalism" of law enforcement agencies and the "vital support and information from the public" that he said had helped the police track down the woman. The police said that an "extensive camera network" had also helped in the search.

"I want to state clearly that the security of the airport was never compromised," Mr. Dickens said at the news conference. "The suspect was apprehended prior to being in any controlled areas of the airport."

The police said that they had responded at about 1:45 p.m. to a report of a person shot at 1280 West Peachtree Street, the address of a high-rise condo tower.

Officers there found two people who had been shot, the police said. One of the victims died; the other was taken to a hospital, the police said, and it was not immediately clear what that person's condition was.

While at 1280 West Peachtree Street, officers received another call at about 2 p.m. of a person shot at 1100 Peachtree Street, less than a mile away, Chief Schierbaum said. There, officers found another person who appeared to have been shot, the police said. That person was taken to the hospital and died, the police said.

The Fulton County Medical Examiner's office identified the victims who died as Michael Shinnars, 60, of Alpharetta, Ga., and Wesley Freeman, 41, of Atlanta.

The police initially described the shooting as "an active situation in Midtown," and local news stations showed heavily armed officers on the streets.

Chief Schierbaum said that officers from various law enforcement agencies had responded, following a protocol for a possible "active shooter" in the area. The authorities, he said, issued a "shelter in place" order and searched the area until the trail led to the airport.

Just before 4 p.m., state troopers blocked a stretch of highway just south of Atlanta's downtown core, bringing one of the city's busiest corridors to a stop at the start of rush hour.

But even before the troopers shut down the highway, drivers saw an unfolding law enforcement response as at least a dozen police vehicles — many unmarked, at least one an armored personnel carrier — raced south toward the airport, blue lights flashing.

The police said that the woman at Hartsfield-Jackson Airport had been taken into custody "without incident."

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HEADLINE	08/22 Auto theft emphasis patrols Pierce Co.
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/pierce-county-task-force-car-theft/281-fd3afb73-c68b-4dba-a1c-dde6da68284a">https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/pierce-county-task-force-car-theft/281-fd3afb73-c68b-4dba-a1c-dde6da68284a</a>

GIST	<p>BONNEY LAKE, Wash. — One day of auto theft-emphasis patrols in Pierce County resulted in 15 recovered vehicles, six arrests, two recovered firearms and the confiscation of approximately 1,000 suspected fentanyl pills.</p> <p>On Friday, the Puget Sound Auto Theft Task Force conducted a multi-agency auto theft emphasis patrol in Pierce County. The agency worked with Tacoma Police, Lakewood Police, Sumner Police, Washington State Patrols and the Pierce County Sheriff's Department.</p> <p>"We know since the laws have changed, auto thefts have gone up along with burglaries and armed robberies and take your pick on any one of those crimes, they're using a stolen vehicle to commit that offense," said Public Information Officer for the Pierce County Sheriff's Department, Darren Moss.</p> <p>In Pierce County, Moss said there's been a 110 percent increase in stolen vehicle in the past five years. The department attributes the rise in part to policing laws that prevent law enforcement from pursuing vehicles. Moss said the law is no secret to criminals.</p> <p>"They're ahead of the game. We've got to be upping our game and figuring new ways to try to combat the new crime wave that we're seeing with stolen vehicles," said Moss.</p> <p>Stolen vehicles are being used to commit other crimes. During the emphasis patrols, the Auto Task Force highlighted three cases.</p> <p>A Chevrolet Camaro was stolen during a residential burglary in Parkland. The driver fled and resisted arrest but was eventually taken into custody. A stolen Honda CRV sped off after Tacoma Police attempted a traffic stop. The car came to a stop after becoming disabled from driving on train tracks. Officers say the passenger in the car had approximately 1,000 suspected fentanyl pills. The third case involved a Chrysler Town and Country that was stolen during a carjacking in Pierce County. Authorities detained six juveniles, which included the 12-year-old driver who was in possession of a .45 handgun.</p> <p>A Washington law requires juveniles to talk to an attorney before police can question them. Moss said because of that law, deputies couldn't ask what the kids were doing, but he worries it could be gang-related.</p> <p>"We have a lot of gang activity that's related to younger kids. A lot of our drive-by shootings and armed robberies, we're seeing young juveniles committing these crimes," said Moss.</p> <p>The 12-year-old was booked into Remann Hall Juvenile Detention Center. The other juveniles were released to their parents. Law enforcement can hold the 12-year-old accountable, but Moss believes there's a bigger question that needs to be asked.</p> <p>"As a society, as a community, we have to figure out what led one of our 12-year-old kids to do something like this?" said Moss.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Mental illness predictor mass shootings?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/22/us/mass-shootings-mental-illness.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/22/us/mass-shootings-mental-illness.html</a>
GIST	<p>The freshman who walked into the high school cafeteria in Marysville, Wash., in 2014 with his father's .40-caliber Beretta did not fit anyone's profile of a mass murderer. He was a crack athlete. He embraced his Native American traditions, wearing a headdress at tribal events and offering freshly killed deer to his grandmother. He was popular, so much so that he had just been elected homecoming prince.</p> <p>He had no history of mental illness — just what several classmates described as an uncharacteristically bad mood that week. It was only after he killed four fellow students and wounded another that the armchair diagnosis of his mental state began.</p>

Blaming mass murder on mental illness is a time-honored impulse, used by law enforcement and politicians alike. “Mental illness and hatred pulls the trigger, not the gun,” President Donald J. Trump said in 2019 in response to mass shootings in El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio. After a teenage gunman killed 19 children and two teachers at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, in May, Gov. Greg Abbott said, “Anybody who shoots somebody else has a mental health challenge. Period.”

Such explanations satisfy a deep longing to understand the incomprehensible. And they appeal to common sense — how could a person who kills indiscriminately be in their right mind?

Yet America’s mass killers fit no single profile and certainly no pattern of insanity — many, if not most, had never been diagnosed with a serious psychiatric disorder. Background checks can prevent someone with a diagnosis of mental illness from acquiring a gun, but psychologists say there is a wide divide between a clinical diagnosis and the type of emotional disturbance that precedes many mass killings.

The real problem, those experts say, is that mental illness is not a useful means to predict violence. About half of all Americans will experience mental health issues at some point in their lives, and the vast majority of people with mental illness do not kill.

“Do you or do you not have a mental health diagnosis?” said Jillian Peterson, a co-founder of the Violence Project, a research center that has compiled a [database of mass shootings](#) from 1966 on and studied perpetrators in depth. “In many cases, it doesn’t really matter. It’s not the main driver.”

Instead, many experts have come to focus on [warning signs](#) that occur whether or not actual mental illness is present, including marked changes in behavior, demeanor or appearance, uncharacteristic fights or arguments, and telling others of plans for violence, a phenomenon known as “leakage.”

This focus is far from perfect — it can be exceedingly difficult to weed out serious threats from many more that are idle, impetuous or exaggerated. But the warning signs approach has benefits: It can work even when the mental health system does not, and it sidesteps the complaint that blaming mass shootings on mental illness increases negative attitudes and stigma toward those who suffer from it.

For Dewey Cornell, an education professor at the University of Virginia who helps train schools to conduct behavioral threat assessments, a bellwether case was that of a high school freshman in West Paducah, Ky. In 1997, he brought guns to school disguised as an art project and opened fire, killing three students and wounding five.

The gunman had schizophrenia and was severely delusional, but that was not what helped Dr. Cornell develop his model for averting school violence.

Rather, it was that the killer’s mental state had clearly worsened over time, meaning there had been opportunities to intervene. He had been bullied, had made threats to his peers and had turned in an essay about shooting a bully at school.

“There were many, many warning signs and leakages and not a single student came forward and said, ‘Hey, I’m concerned,’” Dr. Cornell said. “It’s a case I use in all of my training programs to show how we can make a difference.”

Dr. Cornell said the mental health system is ill-suited to avert mass violence, because insurance companies limit what conditions they will pay to treat, and the laws governing psychiatric commitment, which can prevent people from acquiring guns, have a narrow definition of mental illness.

“We identify individuals who are threatening to harm someone, but they do not meet the criteria for hospitalization because they don’t have schizophrenia or bipolar disorder and they don’t express imminent intent to carry out their actions,” Dr. Cornell said.

Red flag laws are intended to get around some of those limitations by allowing for the temporary removal of a person's guns if they are showing signs of dangerousness, regardless of mental illness.

The problem with relying on mental health diagnoses to predict gun violence has become apparent. The Uvalde gunman had no history of diagnosed mental illness. A teenager in Santa Fe, Texas, had never been diagnosed before he was accused of [killing 10 schoolmates](#) in 2018, though he has repeatedly been found mentally incompetent to stand trial. More than once, people who would go on to kill have been evaluated and sent on their way.

In some cases, treatment did not avert violence. The man who [killed 12 people in a movie theater in Aurora, Colo.](#), in 2012 had been seeing a psychiatrist specializing in schizophrenia.

After the [1999 Columbine High School shooting](#), also in Colorado, the journalist Dave Cullen deflated many of the myths surrounding the massacre when he revealed that the perpetrators were neither outcasts nor bullied. Rather, [he reported](#), one of the two gunmen was a psychopath, lacking in conscience and empathy but abundant in grandiose ideas, and the other was a suicidal depressive who went along with the plan.

And in Florida, where a jury is hearing testimony before sentencing on what motivated Nikolas Cruz to kill 17 people at a high school in Parkland in 2018, the defense is expected to present evidence beginning this week that Mr. Cruz suffered from a range of troubles, including brain damage, central nervous system abnormalities and cognitive deficits.

But there were warning signs: While Mr. Cruz was still a student, behavioral health professionals had been called to the school repeatedly because he made threats and exhibited disturbing behavior. Two guidance counselors and a sheriff's deputy had advised that he be forcibly committed for psychiatric evaluation, but no such commitment ever took place.

In Dr. Peterson's database, more than two-thirds of the perpetrators had some history of mental health concerns, including hospitalization, counseling, psychiatric medication or a previous diagnosis. About 30 percent of the gunmen had some form of psychosis, a category of mental illness that involves difficulty determining reality, and of those, a third killed in direct response to delusions or hallucinations.

But in many cases, the psychosis did not have an influence on their crime, or was only one of several motivating factors. For example, a college student believed that school employees were conspiring against him and had him under surveillance, but turned violent only after failing to get a refund for his tuition.

All of this has prompted some skepticism about the new federal gun law's allocation of \$8.5 billion to expand the country's mental health care system, especially when the number of mass killers is vanishingly small. "If we were to cure serious mental illnesses, violence would go down by 4 percent," said Jeffrey Swanson, a sociologist at Duke University.

Dr. Swanson said his research has found that other factors, like drug and alcohol use, are [more closely connected to violence](#). And study after study has shown that the availability of guns has a far stronger link to violence than psychosocial factors.

Perpetrators are driven by a complex array of factors that can include a desire for fame, radicalization on the internet and childhood trauma, and experts say the means of intervention should be just as broad.

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otential killers may be in need of a mentor, substance abuse treatment, cognitive support at school, or even help for their parents such as child care and transportation. Attention to social climate, like anti-bullying campaigns and programs that teach students how to [recognize and counteract signs of isolation](#), may also avert violence.



J. Reid Meloy, a forensic psychologist and F.B.I. consultant, said that whether or not they are mentally ill, most mass killers develop a sense of having been wronged and choose a group to blame. “The personal grievance, then, typically leads to the individual deciding that there is only a violent solution to the distress that they’re experiencing,” he said.

Dr. Peterson of the Violence Project has framed perpetrators not as monstrous outsiders but members — and products — of their communities who are often signaling that they need help. She and other experts say that interventions should emphasize respect, dignity and inclusion. Punitive, exclusionary responses like expulsion from school are likely to increase the risk of violence.

Four out of five of the perpetrators in the project’s database, Dr. Peterson said, showed signs of crisis — defined as a period when one’s circumstances overwhelm one’s coping mechanisms, shortly before carrying out their crimes.

Crisis can be triggered or exacerbated by mental illness, but also by loss of a job, a breakup, divorce, death or other events. The mother of the Parkland gunman died three months before he carried out his attack at the high school, from which he had been expelled.

This suggests that potential violence can be averted. In [a TEDx talk](#) called “I Was Almost a School Shooter,” a man named Aaron Stark recounted how a friend’s simple invitation to watch a movie helped divert him from his plans. “When someone treats you like a person when you don’t even feel like a human, it’ll change your entire world,” he said.

In interviews with perpetrators, Dr. Peterson said, “We would always ask, is there anything that could have stopped you? And they would always tell us, yes.” She added, “I think one of them said probably anyone could have stopped me, but there was just no one.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Patriot Front’s plan for Idaho pride event</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.krem.com/article/news/investigations/patriot-front-cda-pride-downtown-riot-u-haul/293-ba706c3b-22e0-478b-a6b4-df56fe88ed8e">https://www.krem.com/article/news/investigations/patriot-front-cda-pride-downtown-riot-u-haul/293-ba706c3b-22e0-478b-a6b4-df56fe88ed8e</a>
GIST	<p>COEUR D’ALENE, Idaho — New court documents shed light on just how much planning went into a white nationalist group’s plan to riot at a downtown Coeur d’Alene pride event in June.</p> <p>31 members of the hate group <a href="#">Patriot Front were arrested in June</a> after they were found hiding in the back of a U-Haul trailer. All 31 were arrested and charged with conspiracy to riot, which is a misdemeanor.</p> <p>KREM 2 investigators wanted to know what police learned about the group’s coordinated presence in Coeur d’Alene and what they were planning. After multiple requests, KREM 2 received a redacted copy of those plans from the Kootenai County Clerk’s Office.</p> <p>Coeur d’Alene was preparing for its 2022 Pride in the Park celebration downtown on June 11. Because of prior online chatter and threats from numerous hate groups, Coeur d’Alene Police increased staffing for the event in preparation.</p> <p>As officers were patrolling the downtown area, a call came in from a concerned citizen, saying "a large group of about 20 individuals" was seen getting into the cargo area of a U-Haul truck in the parking lot of the Spring Hill Suites.</p> <p>The caller reported them as "wearing masks, dressed in similar clothing, and equipped with shields." The caller told police the group looked "like a little army."</p> <p>Coeur d’Alene Police are keeping the identity hidden of the original 911 caller, stating it’s because Patriot Front is a known white nationalist and neo-fascist hate group that is known to be violent.</p>

According to court documents, one of the individuals was also believed to be communicating with another man in a red Camry using two-way radio, further indicting to police "an organized and pre-planned event."

Multiple officers responded to pull over the U-Haul. When they opened the rear door, 31 men were found inside, removed from the trailer and detained on the side of the road.

In the back of the U-Haul, police found metal shields, flags on abnormally long metal poles and at least one smoke grenade. Many of the suspects were wearing face masks, shin guards and other protective gear at the time of the arrest, according to documents.

Several suspects were also wearing Patriot Front patches on their clothing.

Officers said it was similar in nature to law enforcement riot control equipment, indicating either an intent to use violence or the threat of violence to disturb the public peace.

Documents show Thomas Rousseau, the man identified as "the leader and founder of Patriot Front," was also carrying documents "outlining call locations, primary checkpoints and drill times, as well as GPS coordinates for a drop point with two backup plans."

These new documents obtained by KREM 2 reveal plans by the group to use "smoke" at the discretion of a "column coordinator" and an exit strategy "once a confrontational dynamic had been established."

Investigators state this "recovered operational plan further indicated the confrontational intentions of the group to antagonize and cause disorder."

In all, 31 men from 13 different states were arrested and two other vehicles were impounded, in addition to the U-Haul.

When questioning one man from Birmingham, Alabama, he told police, "We go where we are needed."

Approximately 20 of the 31 men have already appeared in court and all of them have pleaded not guilty. Rousseau is expected in Kootenai County Court on Aug. 29.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Police fatally shoot man brandishing knife</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/cop-shoots-kills-man-outside-olympia-starbucks/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/cop-shoots-kills-man-outside-olympia-starbucks/</a>
GIST	<p>OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) — A police officer shot and killed a 37-year-old man outside a Starbucks coffee shop in Olympia, Washington, police said.</p> <p>According to police agency spokesperson Paul Lower, officers were called to a Starbucks near Sleater Kinney Road Southeast and Martin Way East around 10:30 a.m. Monday for a disorderly conduct report, KING-TV reported.</p> <p>Lower said the man was allegedly damaging the restroom inside the Starbucks. When officers arrived, police said the man went to the parking lot, pulled out a knife and attacked officers who were trying to arrest him.</p> <p>One officer shot the man, who died at a hospital, according to police. Officers were treated at the scene for injuries.</p> <p>Mark Robinson, who was working at Tractor Supply Company across the parking lot from the Starbucks told KING-TV that he saw the man get shot.</p> <p>"I'm still shaking," Robinson said more than two hours after the shooting.</p>

	Robinson said he saw the man charge at police with something in his raised hand. Robinson said he was too far away to see if it was a knife, but he said he heard officers tell the man to drop a knife.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Suspect posted videos before killings</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/atlanta-shooter-mass-shooting/2022/08/22/id/1084171/">https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/atlanta-shooter-mass-shooting/2022/08/22/id/1084171/</a>
GIST	<p>The woman who was arrested Monday in Atlanta on suspicion of killing two people and wounding one in a mass shooting in the Midtown area posted a preamble to the day's events on what is presumed to be her LinkedIn page.</p> <p>In the post, Raissa Kengne wrote: "I was retaliated against by my former employer [company redacted] because I reported a fraud perpetrated by [name redacted] [name redacted], CPA, CISA, CFE, CITP and covered by [name redacted] [name redacted].</p> <p>"[Company redacted] leverage their relationships with [company redacted] and the 1280 West Board members in the condominium I live in, in order to gain unauthorized access to my home, break into my safe and delete evidence that I had; thereby breaking so many laws that it is hard to believe.</p> <p>"[Company redacted] and its agent went from committing a white collar crime to a criminal crime. APD has been reluctant in providing me with information related to my case. I will post a series of videos to show the policy's response to the crimes committed against me.</p> <p>"I will keep you updated on the status of my case because it is relevant to anyone who has spent many years combating fraud in their professional lives. AICPA Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (PCAOB) U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Atlanta Police Department #cpa #accounting #management #police"</p> <p>Around 1:45 p.m. Eastern time Monday, the Atlanta Police Department responded to reports of two people shot at a condominium building near Colony Square, a popular office and shopping complex in Midtown.</p> <p>One person died, and other was taken to a hospital, according to police.</p> <p>Shortly thereafter, police were called to another call detailing a shooting that occurred less than a mile from the first condo area.</p> <p>At that scene, a third victim was found, and that person later died at the hospital, according to police.</p> <p>After that, Kengne apparently got a ride to the Hartsfield-Jackson airport, roughly a 20-minute drive from Midtown Atlanta at that time of day — if not longer.</p> <p>From there, various Twitter sources posted photos of the condo building and Kengne allegedly getting through the airport security and then attempting to board a plane.</p> <p>Before Kengne could get on the plane, however, police handcuffed and subsequently arrested her.</p> <p>Accompanying the post, there are three different LinkedIn videos featuring Kengne talking to Atlanta police — all with weekend time stamps.</p> <p>In each video, Kengne is apparently trying to report various crimes to the APD.</p> <p>During each session, Kengne exhibited a calm, respectful demeanor, along with the occasional demand to speak to a supervisor.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Bomb found outside Swedish festival</b>
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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/europe/2022-08-22/ty-article/bomb-found-outside-swedish-festival-where-iranian-dissident-played/00000182-c60c-df4d-ab9f-e7beb5180000">https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/europe/2022-08-22/ty-article/bomb-found-outside-swedish-festival-where-iranian-dissident-played/00000182-c60c-df4d-ab9f-e7beb5180000</a>
GIST	<p>Stockholm police destroyed a bag containing explosives that was found in a park in the Swedish capital late on Sunday night and are investigating further, they said on Monday.</p> <p>The five-day Stockholm Culture Festival ended Sunday with a concert by Iranian pop singer Ebi, whose real name is Ebrahim Hamed and who is a <a href="#">known Iranian dissident</a>. The free festival included musical acts, activities, performances and hangouts in six areas across the Swedish capital.</p> <p>The incident took place less than three weeks before a Sept. 11 general election in which crime is set to be a major issue among voters.</p> <p>"The police assess that the bag which was found on Sunday at Kungstradgarden contained an explosive charge," the police said in a statement.</p> <p>A preliminary investigation has been opened and no one has so far been taken into custody. The police gave no details about who might have planted the device or the possible target.</p> <p>"Now all the components will be examined," Erik Akerlund, chief of police for the city's Norrmalm district said in a statement.</p> <p>"It is only after a full examination at the national forensic centre that we will be able to say whether the dangerous object was functional."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 DOJ civil rights probe into violent arrest</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cbsnews.com/news/arkansas-violent-arrest-video-zack-king-levi-white-thell-riddle-randal-worcester-federal-civil-rights/">https://www.cbsnews.com/news/arkansas-violent-arrest-video-zack-king-levi-white-thell-riddle-randal-worcester-federal-civil-rights/</a>
GIST	<p>The Department of Justice has opened a federal civil rights investigation into the <a href="#">violent arrest of a 27-year-old man in Arkansas</a> on Sunday, a department spokesperson confirmed to CBS News on Monday. The investigation will be separate from the state probe into the arrest, which was captured on video.</p> <p>The video shows the three officers repeatedly hitting 27-year-old Randal Worcester of Goose Creek, South Carolina. One officer repeatedly strikes Worcester with a closed fist while another knees him several times in the lower body. The officers are also seen slamming Worcester's head into the pavement.</p> <p>Crawford County Sheriff Jim Damante said Monday that none of the three officers were wearing body cameras. The Mulberry police officer's vehicle was equipped with a dash cam.</p> <p>"The dash cam does bring to light other things that did happen there that initiated, that wasn't caught on the citizen's camera," Damante said.</p> <p>Also Monday, officials identified the three law enforcement officials who have been suspended over the arrest: Crawford County Sheriff's Office deputies Zack King and Levi White and Mulberry police officer Thell Riddle.</p> <p>The officers were responding to a report of a man making threats outside a convenience store Sunday in the small town of Mulberry, about 140 miles northwest of Little Rock, near the border with Oklahoma, authorities said.</p> <p>According to Damante, a man was allegedly making "terroristic threats" against a gas station employee. The man, identified as Worcester, allegedly threatened to cut the employee's face off at one point. He then left and biked about seven miles before officers caught up with him.</p>

Damante claims that Worcester, who is White, surrendered a knife to the officers and then "football tackled" one of the deputies and punched him in the back of the head. The violent arrest captured on video then followed, according to Damante.

None of the officers were rookies, Damante said Monday, telling reporters that all three had been in law enforcement for some time. The sheriff's office is conducting an internal investigation in addition to the Arkansas State Police's criminal investigation, Damante said.

Worcester was initially taken to a local hospital for treatment. After his release, he was taken to Van Buren County Jail.

Worcester has been charged with second degree battery, resisting arrest, refusal to submit, possessing an instrument of crime, criminal trespass, criminal mischief, terroristic threatening, and second degree assault, police said.

Worcester was released Monday on \$15,000 bond. When asked how he was feeling, he said "all right."

Carrie Jernigan, an attorney representing Worcester, told CBS News that she had made a separate excessive force complaint for a different client against Deputy White.

Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson, a Republican, on Monday described the beating as "reprehensible conduct" and said the officers' actions were "not consistent" with the teachings of the Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy.

Arkansas State Police Col. Bill Bryant said his agency's investigation would "take some time."

"Once we get the facts and evidence, we'll prepare a case file and a summary and turn it over to the prosecutor," Bryant said.

Cellphone video of often-violent police interactions has put a spotlight on officer conduct in recent years, particularly since the 2020 killing of George Floyd while he was being arrested by police in Minneapolis.

The resulting nationwide protests called attention to officer brutality that often targets Black Americans.

The front door at a building that serves as the Mulberry police headquarters and city hall was locked Monday. A sign on the door directed anyone with questions about "the police investigation" to contact Arkansas State Police.

Amid public pressure for transparency and the proliferation of videos exposing police misconduct, there has been some pushback against recording officers. In July, the governor of Arizona signed a bill that makes it illegal to knowingly record officers from 8 feet or closer without permission.

Mulberry is a town of 1,600 people on the southern edge of the Ozarks in western Arkansas, right off Interstate 40, which runs from California to North Carolina.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Mexico: journalist killed; 15<sup>th</sup> this year</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/journalist-killed-mexico-15th-die-year-88715292">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/journalist-killed-mexico-15th-die-year-88715292</a>
GIST	<p>MEXICO CITY -- A journalist who ran an online local news program was shot to death Monday in southern Mexico, making him the 15th media worker killed so far this year nationwide.</p> <p>Prosecutors in the southern state of Guerrero said Monday that Fredid Román was gunned down in the state capital, Chilpancingo.</p> <p>Román's program, "The Reality of Guerrero," focused heavily on state-level politics. He also wrote a column.</p>

	<p>Guerrero is a state where drug gangs, armed vigilantes and other groups regularly clash.</p> <p>2022 has been one of the deadliest ever for journalists in Mexico, which is now considered the most dangerous country for reporters outside a war zone.</p> <p>Prosecutors did not immediately offer any further details on the killing of Román, who local media said had previously published a newspaper under the same name and was shot inside his vehicle.</p> <p>The killing comes just one week after independent journalist Juan Arjón López was found dead in the northern border state of Sonora. Prosecutors said he died from a blow to the head. His body was found in San Luis Rio Colorado, across the border from Yuma, Arizona.</p> <p>That area has been hit by drug cartel violence in recent years. In March, volunteer searchers found 11 bodies in clandestine burial pits in a stretch of desert near a garbage dump in San Luis.</p> <p>At the beginning of August, a journalist was among four people killed inside a beer shop in the central Mexico state of Guanajuato.</p> <p>Authorities said it was unknown whether that attack was related to the journalist's work, his role as representative of local businesses in the planning of an upcoming fair or something else.</p> <p>While organized crime is often involved in journalist killings, small town officials or politicians with political or criminal motivations are often suspects as well. Journalists running small news outlets in Mexico's interior are easy targets.</p> <p>Jan-Albert Hootsen, the Mexico representative for the Committee to Protect Journalists, wrote after Arjón López's killing that "although some arrests have been made in earlier cases of press killings this year, an ongoing climate of impunity continues to fuel these attacks."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/22 Oklahoma sheriff's deputy shot, killed</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/oklahoma-sheriffs-deputy-shot-killed-serving-order/story?id=88711938">https://abcnews.go.com/US/oklahoma-sheriffs-deputy-shot-killed-serving-order/story?id=88711938</a>
GIST	<p>A sheriff's deputy has died after being shot while serving a lockout order at a home, the Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office said Monday.</p> <p>One deputy was shot and a second deputy was hit while trying to get the first out of the way of gunfire, an emotional Sheriff Tommie Johnson III said during a press conference.</p> <p>The Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office identified Sgt. Bobby Swartz as the officer who was killed.</p> <p>"Today, the Oklahoma County Sheriffs Office mourns the loss of a good man. Two of our deputies were shot while serving a lock out order. One deputy succumbed to his injuries; the other is in stable condition. We plan to release more details soon. Until then please keep us in your prayers," the sheriff's office wrote on Facebook.</p> <p>The suspect took off on a pursuit and was taken into custody at the entrance of Tinker Air Force Base.</p> <p>The other deputy is in the hospital and sustained serious injuries.</p>
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